JAMMU AND KASHMIR
SOMNATH DHAR

INDIA — THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

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SOMNATH DHAR

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CHAPTER I

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

ONE OF THE largest States of the Indian Union, Jammu and Kashmir State covers an area of 2,22,870 sq km and includes, besides the celebrated Kashmir Valley, the area of Jammu, Ladakh, Baltistan, Gilgit, Hunza and Nagar. (Out of these, Gilgit, Hunza and Nagar are under Pakistani occupation). Until 1947 Jammu and Kashmir was the largest princely state of undivided India.

The State lies between 32°17′ to 36°58′ North Latitude and 73°26′ to 80°30′ East Longitude. From north to south it extends over 640 km and from east to west 480 km It occupies the north-west niche of India, bounded on the south by Himachal Pradesh and the Punjab, on the south-west and west by Pakistan, on the north by Chinese Turkistan and a little of Russian Turkistan, and on the east by Chinese Tibet—thus strategically bordering on the territories of three powers: Russia, China and Pakistan.

POPULATION

The population of the State—according to the 1971 Census—is 46,16,632 (24,58,315 males and 21,58,317 females)—the figure excludes the areas under the occupation of Pakistan and China. In terms of density of population—26 persons per sq km—this is the lowest figure, compared to the all-India figure of 138 per sq km But the increase of population during the decade 1961-71 was the highest in India, the growth rate being 29.65 per cent, the 1961 population being 35,60,976 (18,96,633 males and 16,64,343 females).

The religion-wise break-up of the population shows that Muslims who constitute the predominant religious community of the State have gone up from 24,32,067 in 1961 to 30,40,129

in 1971. The second largest community, the Hindus, increased their number from 10,13,193 to 14,04,292 during the same period. The position in respect of other religious groups is:

Religion	*Population*	
	1961	*1971*
Buddhists	48,360	57,956
Christians	2,848	7,182
Jains	1,427	1,150
Sikhs	63,069	1,05,873
Other religions	3	8
Religion not stated	9	42

An important characteristic of the population revealed by the Census is the phenomenal progress in literacy in the State. As against 11.03 per cent in 1961, the 1971 Census showed that the percentage had gone up to 18.30—a growth rate of 65.91 per cent, the highest for any State of India during the decade, when the all-India figure stood at 22.14 per cent. Jammu led the other districts of the State with a literate population of 30.32 per cent. Srinagar and Kathua districts also attained a literacy rate higher than the State average. The percentage of increase in female literacy registered in 1971, over that in 1961, was 113.62 the highest for any State in India, and considerably higher than what it is in respect of male literacy in Jammu and Kashmir State.

The State comprises mostly mountainous terrain, rising in several tiers from the plains in the south to the high altitude valleys—average altitude, 1800 metres above sea level—whose mountains rise up to 5000 metres and over. In Ladakh and Kargil, there are several of the loftiest inhabited villages and towns in the world.

Geographically, the Jammu and Kashmir State is divided into three main regions—the Kashmir Valley, the Jammu Province and the Frontier Area—with diverse mountainous topography varying in altitude from 300 metres to 8,690 metres above sea level.

KASHMIR VALLEY

The Valley of Kashmir (area: 15,120.3 sq km) is a unique oval plain, approximately 134 km in length and 32 to 40 km in breadth, at an average height of 1800 metres above sea level, and nestled securely among the Pir Panjal range of the Himalayas. Nowhere else in the world can one find such an amphitheatre of snowcapped mountains surrounding such a large plain and traversed throughout its length by a navigable river (the Jhelum).

The mountains which surround the Valley are varied in form, height and colour. To the east stands hoary-headed Harmukh (5,150 metres), the formidable mountain guarding the Valley of the Sindh. Further south is Mahadev and the lofty ranges of Gwasha Brari (5,425 metres). The peak of Amarnath (5,280 metres) also lies in this area. On the south-west are the Pir Panjal ranges with peaks 4500 metres high and to the north are ranges and ranges of the Karakorams and the Himalayas, dominated by the majestic Nanga Parbat (7980 metres), also called by the poetic name of 'Diyamir'. Covered with snow all the year round, and rising glistening white, it is the fifth highest mountain in the world. Latitudewise, Kashmir corresponds to Damascus in Syria, Fez in Morocco and South Carolina in the USA.

Legend corresponds with the results of geological observations that the Kashmir Valley was a vast lake, Satisar, in prehistoric times. The sandstone rock at the western corner of the basin was most probably rent by volcanic action. The lake was drained by the deepening of the Baramulla gorge—the result of the slow process of erosion spread over geological years. Tradition has it that the drainer of the lake was Kashyap, after whom the valley was called *Kashyap-mar*, which became Kashmir. According to an interpretation, Kashmir is a Prakrit compound with its components *kas* meaning a channel and *mir*, a mountain—the compound word adding to 'a rock trough'. In the *Puranas*, Kashmir is called *Gerek* (hill) because of its overwhelming hilly features. The word *Kashmir* has

been shortened by Kashmiris into *Kashir*; the Kashmiri calls his language *Koshur* or *Kashur*.

The shape of the Valley is that of an elliptical saucer. The floor of the vast valley is built of small consolidated lake beds and alluvial soils. Numerous plateaus, locally known as *Karewas*, stand up isolated in the middle of the Valley. The green cultivated fields of these terraces contrast sharply with the bleak mountains.

Kashmir is a land of lakes and rivers. The deep and clear waters of the lakes reflect the high peaks of snow-capped mountains. The river Jhelum (ancient name, *Vitasta*—degenerated into *Veth*, in Kashmiri parlance) meanders in the Valley in artistic zigzags, which have furnished the motifs to the deft Kashmiri artisans. Nestled among hills in the north-east of the Valley is the Wular (20 by 8 km), the largest fresh-water lake in India. The Dal Lake, well-known for the Mughal gardens flanking it in the vicinity of Srinagar, is about six km long and about three km broad. Other well-known lakes are the Manasbal (the deepest in Kashmir), the Kaunsar Nag (3901.44 metres) and the Gangabal and other mountain tarns, at an elevation of over 3300 metres. In the Lidder Valley, there are huge glaciers like Kolohai—about eight km long and it comes down as low as 3300 metres. The mountains and lakes are complemented by luxuriant orchards, dotted with the majestic Chinar trees, making for so many breath-taking spectacles. No wonder, the French physician, Dr Francois Bernier, wrote in the mid-seventeenth century, about the Vale: "In truth, the land surpassed in beauty all that my warmest imagination had anticipated, and it is probably unequalled by any country of the same extent."

The Kashmir Valley enjoys an enchanting climate for the major part of the year. A unique thing about the climate is the four clear-cut seasons—spring, summer, autumn and winter. Till the end of May, the climate of Kashmir is comparable with that of Switzerland. In spring, the Valley wears blankets of emerald green grass and is decked with flowers of various

hues and fresh leaves—a phenomenon of rejuvenation from the rigours of a long winter. It is then the world's most wonderful of natural gardens. In summer, the sleepy blue mountains with snow-capped peaks, clear streams, cool bubbling springs, limpid torrents, beautiful lakes, shady Chinar groves, silvery poplars, drooping willows and pine forests make Kashmir the "Playground of Asia". In autumn, the trees, and forests turn into bronze and copper colours, and the foliage becomes a riot of golden yellow and green. A walk over fallen Chinar leaves makes a ruslting musical sound. In winter time, the giant size trees wear a bare look when the landscape dons a mantle of snow.

Srinagar (the City of Saraswati—the goddess of learning) is an ancient city. Founded by Ashoka the Great (272-232 B.C.), it was then called 'Pravarapura', after King Praversena. Srinagar was a great seat of learning in those days, throbbing with life and bristling with commerce. It was also called 'Shrinagri'—the city of wealth and beauty. Situated in the centre of the Valley, Srinagar, the summer capital of the State, is the most populous city, covering an area of about 28½ sq km. The river Jhelum, running through the city, lends an idyllic charm to it, flanked by the Dal Lake and intersected by canals; hence it has been called the 'Venice of the East'.

Anantnag (also called Islamabad) is another ancient town of Kashmir, about 64 km to the north of Srinagar. It is an exotic town where springs and streams run in every other compound. Some of these are sulphurous springs which have curative qualities.

Other major cities are Baramulla and Sopore, both situated on the Jhelum, after the river enters the Wular Lake and comes out of it. It is at Baramulla that the Jhelum after running a calm and navigable course of 166 km in the Valley escapes in turbulent torrents over mountain gorges.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of the Valley, engaging about 70 per cent of her population. The net sown area is 1,651,603 acres. Rice, wheat, barley and fruit are

cultivated. With an improvement in irrigation, suitable crop rotation, use of fertilisers and machinery, there is a possibility of increasing the cultivable land and raising greater agricultural yields. Raising livestock is another source of income to the farmers. New breeds have been introduced to improve the quality and strength of the livestock. The intricate and pleasing floral and faunal designs worked by the Kashmiri artisan on the shawls, carpets and papier-mache products owe their inspiration directly to the lovely surroundings in which he lives, and to what has been fittingly called "the Paradise of the Indies".

Jammu Province

The strip of level land at the northernmost extremity of the plains of the Punjab touches the low ridges of the hills, which, spread over a large tract, constitute what is called the 'Region of the Outer Hills'. Varying in height from 600 metres to 1200 metres above sea level, these rugged hills run parallel to one another, enclosing small, narrow valleys.

The Province of Jammu lies between the 'Outer Hills' region, bounding the Valley of Kashmir in the south, and the hilly tract extending to the plains of the Punjab. The river Ravi flows in the east of this region and the river Jhelum in the west. The Chenab issues forth from the mountains into the plains near the town of Akhnur and flows through the Jammu district before entering the plains of the Punjab (now in Pakistan).

The 'outer hills' region consists of Udhampur, Ramnagar and Rampur. The rugged hills give way in the north and north-east to the outer hills of the Siwaliks, 1200 metres to 3600 metres above sea level. There is a continuous rise in elevation to what are conveniently called the 'middle hills' or the middle Himalayas. Small narrow valleys give way to deep gorges and picturesque valleys, largely formed due to the denudation wrought by the fast-flowing rivers over thousands of geological years. In this region lie the districts of Batote, Bhadarwah, Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban.

Jammu city, the winter capital of the State, stands on one of the spurs of a rugged hill overlooking the plains and the river Tawi. The city is about 300 metres above sea level and about 4 km wide. According to the 1971 census, the city had a population of 1,55,338. The prominent features of the city are its temples, whose pointed spires can be seen from afar. Other towns in this plain, and to the east of the Chenab are Basoli, Ramkot, Ramnagar and Samba and to the west of the Chenab, Akhnur and Bhimber.

The Jammu province occupies an area of 26089.4 sq km The area abounds in beautiful natural scenery. The relief features of the province provide interesting climatic as well as floral phenomena. There is a sort of wind divide starting from Poonch and extending to the southern edge of the Pir Panjal. This area has summer precipitation. As in the plains, the SW Monsoons cause rain in the 'outer plains' area and the 'outer hills' region, though not with the same intensity. As the altitude rises towards the 'middle mountains' area of Batote, Bhadarwah, Kishtwar, Padar and Banihal, the summer rainfall averages 45 inches. Riasi and Poonch get more than 60 inches of rainfall annually. The 'outer plains' areas of Ramnagar, Ramkot, Samba, Basoli, Akhnur and Bhimber experience the extremes of tropical heat. The average annual rainfall in the Jammu district is nearly 45 inches. The hot season lasts from April to June, followed by the rainy season from July to September. The intensity of the heat in summer is comparable to that of the plains of India. Winter lasts from October to March.

There is a luxurious growth of vegetation all over the 'outer hill' and the 'middle mountain' areas which is mostly of tropical variety. The upper reaches of the mountains are thickly covered with coniferous forests. The lower regions have forests of silver fir, deodar, spruce, oak and pine. The best varieties of pine and deodar are found in the dense forests of Kishtwar and Bhadarwah. The 'plains area' abounds in cactus varieties of bushes and trees.

The main crops in the Jammu valley are maize, rice, millet, barley and wheat. Irrigation facilities have been extended to bolster cultivation, especially of rice and wheat. Maize, wheat, barley and cotton grow extensively on the hillsides.

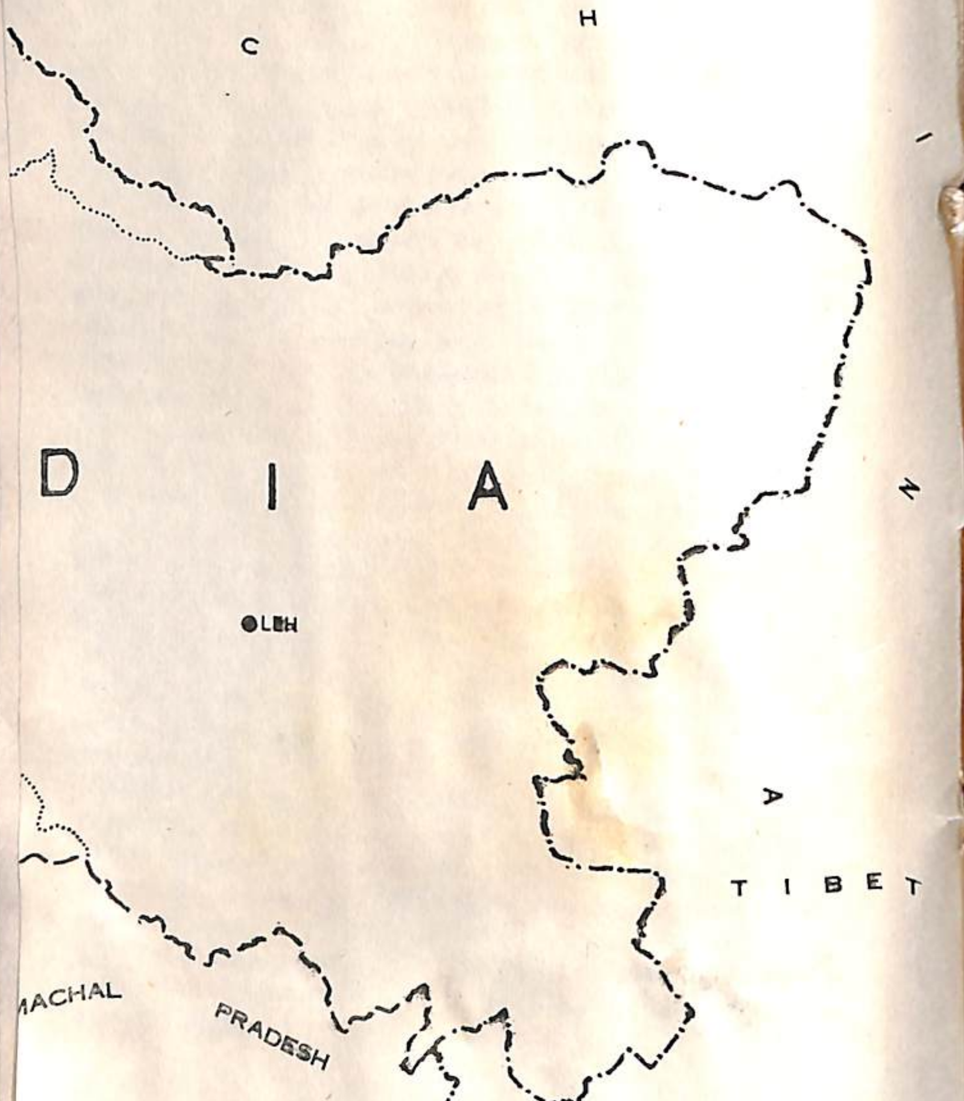
Jammu province is rich in minerals. Coal, bauxite, copper, zinc and lead are abundant. Sapphire mines are located at higher elevations in the Padar Valley. Semi-precious stones like beryl and aquamarine, and, crystals like quartz and felspar are also found in the region. Riasi has coal, gem stones, gypsum, clay, copper, bauxite and iron ore.

Though little known, the tableland of Kishtwar, flanked by the high and steep mountains of the 'middle mountains' region, is situated at a height of 1645 km above sea level. It has an area of 7311 sq km and a population of 65,000. Its extensive, unbroken and awe-inspiring hills can be monotonous and oppressive, but the dark fir-covered hills and heavily forested mountains break the monotony, providing a unique scenery. Kishtwar is famous for mines of sapphire and rubies. The climate is pleasant and bracing in summer and cold in winter.

Kishtwar and Bhadarwah, with heavily forested mountains, are rich in pine, fir and deodar. The best varieties of pine and deodar are found in this area. The forests of the area are regular haunts of lovers of hunting. They can hunt panthers, black and red bears, wild goats, ibex, musk deer, wolf, fox, *barasingha*, pig, Himalayan chamois, leopards, etc. In the river beds, swamps and low forests, a variety of winged game—duck, goose, *chakor*, monal pheasant, partridge and snipe—are found in preserves for sportsmen.

Saffron (of a brighter colour but of an inferior quality than that of the Valley) is grown here. Black cumin, medicinal herbs, like *banafsha*, *kahzaban*, *dhoop*, musk, bala, artemesia, belladonna, etc., are aplenty in the region. Narcotic herbs are also found. Blankets and leather goods of the region are famous. The greatest handicap that prevents this region from being developed into a holiday resort lies in its remoteness and comparative inaccessibility.

MAP OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR





Based upon Survey of India map with the permission of the Surveyor General of In

LADAKH

Beyond the Valley of Kashmir, the inner Himalayas rising in the north and east contain the Frontier Region of the State. The territory comprises the three geographical divisions of Ladakh, Baltistan and Dardistan. A major portion of Baltistan and the whole of Dardistan are at the moment under Pakistani occupation. Out of the total area of the State of 138,992.1 sq km, the district of Ladakh (97,782 sq km) covers an area of 70.4 per cent of the total area on the Indian side of the Cease-fire Line.

The Province of Ladakh touches the Chinese border on the north, merges into Tibet in the east and is contained along the south by the extension of the Great Himalayan Range. The Karakoram Range of mountains lies in the north of Ladakh. The second highest peak in the world, K2, crowns one of its many tall mountains. The Karakoram Pass (5517.64 metres) is situated towards the northeast of the Karakoram, in an area where China, Tibet and Ladakh meet. This pass facilitates a direct route from India to China.

Until some years ago, Ladakh used to be the gateway to Tibet, connecting India with Tibet and East Turkistan. As such it was an important trade centre, besides being the meeting point of the Tibetan, Indian, Chinese and Islamic cultures and traditions.

Leh, the capital (3521 metres above sea level), is a fascinating town built on a hillside and surrounded by rocky hills. It was the commercial nerve centre of Central Asia just as Hong Kong is of the Far East. Famous caravan routes started from Leh in the north to Yarkand and Kashgar, in the east to Lhasa, in the south to India and in the west to Baltistan and Kashmir Valley. Traders thronged to Leh from Turkey, Arab countries, Iran and Afghanistan. That hustle and bustle has since been reduced due to tensions with Pakistan and China, and the trade routes blocked. Leh town is full of orchards, groves and gardens and crowded with people and monasteries. Poplars and willows are a plenty. Apples, apricots and giant-size melons are grown in these orchards.

A magic land of legend and lore, Ladakh, is a mountainous terrain between the Himalayas and the Kuenlum mountains. It comprises the biggest district of Jammu and Kashmir State, with an area of 97,782 sq. km. One of the highest habitations in the world, Ladakh has an elevation ranging between 2400 metres and 4500 metres above sea level. The average height of its mountains is between 5000 and 7000 metres. The barren mountain ranges stretch through the area from south-east to north-west. Its valleys, about 500 sq km in area, lie along the head-waters of the Indus, the Sutlej and the Chenab rivers. The great river Indus, having originated hundreds of kilometres further east from near the Kailash mountain and the Mansarovar lake in Tibet, flows in an almost straight line from the north-west to the south-east of Ladakh. The river enters the region of Skardu in Baltistan. The gigantic barren mountains, devoid of any vegetation, offer an endless variety in landscape, breath-taking phenomena of colours and variegated moods of nature, topped by an aura more exotic than any of the picturesque sights of Kashmir. Glaciers and the snow-capped mountains encircling the crystal-clear lakes, enhance this rugged beauty further.

Geological research has established that when the Indian sub-continent moved northwards some 45 million years ago, it happened to collide with the underside of Asia. That colliding line is the Indus suture, near the town of Puga—a day's drive from Leh. The suture is of immense geological significance. An interesting spectacle in Ladakh is presented by hot springs and geysers roaring and throwing steaming hot water up to a height of 15 metres and projecting fantastic rainbow colours. These fountains of water present an interesting phenomenon in winter when the boiling water comes down in the shape of ice blocks with the impact of chilly winds, and forms hillocks next to geysers.

In the north-east of Leh, at Nyoma (another town), lies an unusual terrain, where the colour of the soil and rocks is purple. The mountain-peaks are sky-embracing. There is a conspicuous absence of life in any form and hence it has been aptly called

the "land of the broken moon", truly a poetical name.

Over the Ladakh range and in the north of Leh, the road to Khardung La (5,600 metres above sea level) is the highest road in the world—a veritable walk over thick ice-sheets, ice-walls and glaciers, with the Karakoram range in the background. Further on, in Chushul, the Pangong salt water lake is about 112 km long. Its water is blue-green and sometimes indigo-purple.

Kargil (about 2750 metres above sea level) has a similar network of mountains around it. The river Suru runs through the area which is rather undeveloped. There is no water supply system. The people of Kargil do some farming and raise sheep. Their houses are built of stone and plastered with thick layers of mud to escape the extreme rigours of cold. They profess Islam.

The high altitude of Ladakh and Kargil and high mountains encircling the region on all sides give it a unique climate—absolute dryness (the annual rainfall is about 4 inches and there is very little snow), arctic cold and extremes of weather. It is burning hot by day and piercing cold by night; very hot in summer and extremely cold in winter. The inhabitants are prone to suffer from high altitude complaints of nose bleeding, headache, sleeplessness and wheezing noses.

THE PEOPLE

According to historians, the Indo-European ancestors of Kashmiris entered Kashmir from the colder Siberian abodes, before the advent of Aryans. The contacts of Kashmiris with the Rig Vedic people started later, fructifying in the Kashmiris' remarkable contribution to Sanskrit literature. With the spread of Buddhism many scholars came to Kashmir from far-off lands for research and study of the various schools of Indian philosophy. Buddhism existed side by side with Hinduism in this golden period of Kashmir's history. Kashmiris, in their long and chequered history, came in contact with the Roman, Greek and Persian civilizations, and the interaction made for a

happy blending of cultures. Kashmiris made great contributions to story-telling, mystical poetry, the Shaiva philosophy, grammar and the sciences. The folk songs and dances, as well as the various arts and crafts, for which Kashmir is world-famous, bear eloquent testimony to the artistic and cultural genius of the people of Kashmir.

KASHMIRI

Most of the people of Kashmir claim their descent from the Indo-Aryan stock. It is said that if there is any trace of pure Aryans in India, it is to be found in Kashmir. Actually, Kashmir is inhabited by diverse and different races, distinct in their looks, habiliments, food, habits, customs, speech and traditions. Ethnic infiltration and conversions took place from time to time when hordes of invaders forced their way into the Valley, in groups, large and small, as vandals, as looters and as exploiters. The Chaks, Pathans, Mughals and Sikhs ruled Kashmir for some periods, and did their best to alter the cultural pattern of the Kashmiris but no one succeeded in changing the exclusiveness and distinct character of the people. Kashmiris' patience, sense of sufferance and manoeuvring genius, withstood all the onslaughts, absorbing some foreign elements in their own, and yet contriving to keep the basic fabric of their culture intact. The Mughal rulers came to Kashmir but theirs was a quest for exclusive enjoyment among the environs of the Valley and they left the local population generally alone.

The Kashmiris possess an individuality and character which distinguishes them wherever they go. They are passionately fond of their 'good earth'. And, no matter what creed they follow, they are Kashmiris first and Kashmiris last.

Most of the people in the Valley are fair-complexioned, with light brown hair, blue or grey eyes, chiselled features and good build. And, there are people with a wheatish complexion, black almond eyes and black hair. Kashmiris tend to be superstitious. Their life is guided by taboos of all sorts, though modernism has been blowing in a whiff of fresh air. Artistic by profession,

they lack art sense, rather pathetically, in their private lives.

The Kashmiris, on the whole, are non-aggressive and temperate in nature and very God-fearing. They have been regarded not only as non-martial in character but also as timid, however, this myth has been exploded by them after Independence, specially by the heroic manner in which they withstood three incursions from across the borders. Sir John Strachey, who said in his famous work *India—Its Administration and Progress*, that there are "... few greater cowards than the stalwart Muhammadans of Kashmir" would have been surprised to find how these very people defended their motherland bravely three times against savage hordes from Pakistan.

The non-aggressive, inborn traits, however, continue. Interesting, noisy and harmless quarrels among the less affluent classes are well known. They hurl insults at one another and bandy the most loaded abuses, pointing clenched fists at each other but the wordy warfare never explodes into hitting each other! Though Kashmiris have a good physique, they lack good muscle. They have very keen intellect, on the whole. Kashmiris are a bundle of contradictions; vociferous; yet timid to the extent of crying in helplessness, loath to hurt yet very abusive, master-artists yet lacking art sense, lowly yet intellectual and mystical, shrewd yet businesslike and persistent, emotional and ruled by sentiment, gossipy and prone to listen to rumours, polite on the face yet abusive and rumour-mongers behind your back. With all such positive and negative elements in Kashmiri character, the Kashmiris can be singled out as extremely warm, friendly and hospitable. They tend to over-feed the guest and lavish all attention on *dai-pocch* (God's messenger in the form of a guest).

Whereas the Kashmiri Pandit's life and habits are simple and frugal, he tends to be individualistic, with an element of self—esteem, largely intellectual. Traditionally, he avoided doing manual labour and has clung to professional and administrative jobs. In bygone days, he used to be reluctant to go away from his beautiful home land to seek better opportunities in other parts

of India. But the fast-changing times have since changed his outlook completely. There is hardly any town in the Indian Union including Andamans where Kashmiri Pandits have not settled. A Kashmiri Muslim, on the other hand, is generally more active, energetic and dynamic. He is an unrivalled craftsman, deftly producing time-honoured designs at once intricate and beautiful, on papier-mache, wood, silver and gold, and embroiders and weaves the most exquisite shawls, carpets and rugs. He is an excellent cultivator, rears sheep and cattle and is self-employed in cottage industries. There is scarcely a thing which he cannot do. He understands profit and loss and is a shrewd businessman, often lying and bargaining for hours till he strikes the right deal. Colonel Durand, writing towards the beginning of the present century, observed: "It will take many a long year before the Kashmiri becomes a man. Centuries of oppression had sapped his energy, taken awareness of his status out of him." If he were alive today, he would have been surprised to find that the Kashmiris are slowly but perceptibly changing under the impact of modern influences and carving a place of pride for themselves not only in their environs but also in the mainstream of the country as a whole.

Ninety per cent of the population in the Valley profess Islam, of both Sunni and Shia sects. The rest are Kashmiri Pandits. There are some Sikhs. The Kashmiri Pandits do not have castes like Hindus in rest of India. Dr T.N. Madan[1] however, mentions two Brahmin subcastes. About the Pandits' relation with the Muslims, he says: "A Brahmin can enter the Muslim society by renouncing his religion but there is no known 'route' for the entry of a Muslim into the Brahmanic fold."

Rice is the staple food of the Kashmiris. And, meat cooked in delicious varieties goes with it. Kashmiris rave about *karam sag* (a kind of leafy green vegetable), *nadru* (lotus stalk) and turnips.

[1]T.N. Madan: *Family and Kinship; A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir*, Asia Publishing House, 1965. (Also see Dr Madan's paper: Religious Ideology in a Plural Society; the Muslims and Hindus of Kashmir, *Indian Sociology;* new series, Number VI, December 1972.)

Wherever a Kashmiri goes, he carries these precious vegetables as token presents. Kashmiris are known for their culinary art, or, more accurately, the cooking of lamb dishes in various ways, each distinct in taste from the other. The tea Kashmiris drink is called *Kahva*, a concoction of green tea leaves brewed in the *samovar* and enriched with pounded almonds, cardamom seeds and cinnamon stalks, overdosed with sugar and served without milk. The other kind of tea is *Shirchai*—salted and milked, pink in colour, with lots of cream on top of it.

Kashmiri Muslims used to wear the *pheran*, a long loose gown, hanging down to the knees, a white turban tied on a skull cap, a close-fitting *shalwar* and laceless shoes, called *gurgabi*. A white piece of material (generally a white shawl) hung on their shoulders like a stole. The dress looked graceful but made them rather indolent. The departure in the case of Hindu men's wear was a *churidar* pyjama instead of a *shalwar*. This ensemble was the hall-mark of aristocracy in Kashmir. The less affluent Muslims wore skull caps, which looked cute, and didn't carry any shawls. The old attire is giving way to modern suits though skull caps are still in use in the rural areas.

Kashmiri women are beautiful and among the best feminine types in India. They compare favourably with the Iranian and Turkish beauties in appearance and complexion, but have distinctly clear-cut delicate features. They have "an English rosiness of complexion behind the Eastern tan". The colour of their hair ranges from golden red to brunette and that of eyes from green, blue grey to black. It is but natural that they have been the object of panegyrics for their unrivalled beauty and charm. "The eyes of a beautiful Kashmiri woman have such an urgency mingled with pathos, that you look into them as you would look into spring waters, wondering," wrote James Milne[1] characterising her as "a primal creature in her Garden of Eden". The smart, easy movements and alert mien of the *Hanji* boatwomen, sitting at the helm of the houseboat or the *doonga*, attract the

[1]Milne, J.; *Road to Kashmir*.

notice of visitors who admire her physique. Besides being boat-women and farmers, the women of Kashmir carry on many other occupations. They wear the *pheran*, the ample Kashmiri gown, hemmed with a border and hanging] in awkward folds. The long loose *pheran* covers their physique no doubt, but does not blunt their physical appeal. Whereas a Muslim woman's *pheran* is knee-length, loose and embroidered in front and on the edges, a Hindu woman's *pheran* touches her feet. For the sake of smartness and ease, it is tied at the waist with folded material (its brocade edges falling as tassels in the centre) called *luhungi*. The long, loose sleeves are fashionably decorated with brocade. With this type of Hindu costume goes the headdress called *taranga*, which is tied to a hanging bonnet and tapers down to the heels from behind. The folds of the *taranga* are made of brightly-pressed linen fastened to a pointed red-coloured and brocaded skull cap with a few gold pins at the sides. Over the head and ears are pieces of muslin embroidered in gold thread. The younger Hindu women, however, have taken to the sari, after the 'reform movement' of the, thirties. Even then, on the wedding day they have to wear the *taranga* ceremonially. It is covered with the *palav* of the bride's wedding sari. *Taranga* thus stays as part of the bridal trousseau.

Though continuing to be in much greater use among the Muslim women, the fashion trends have edged out the *pheran*, which is replaced by *shalwar-kameez*, but the total affect of the ensemble is hardly attractive compared to the *pheran*. Unlike a Hindu woman's *pheran*, which gives her a Roman look, the Muslim Woman's *pheran* is beautifully embroidered in front. Their headgear, the *kasaba*, looks very different from the *taranga*. It is red in colour, tied turban-like and held tight by an abundance of silver pins and trinkets. It has an overhanging pin-scarf which falls gracefully over the shoulders. A workaday *shalwar* goes with it. Unmarried Muslim girls wear skull caps, embroidered with gold thread and embellished with silver pendents, trinkets and amulets.

The dress of a Gujar woman of the hills of the Valley is very

much similar to that worn by the Turkish village woman. It consists of an ample *shalwar* and full-skirted tunic with loose sleeves. A thick-veil on the head falls back to the shoulders. This costume is a quaint replica of the attire of the shepherd women all over the Middle East. The Gujar women knit their hair in multiple plaits which hang in front, covering half of their moon-shaped faces.

Kashmiri women generally have such love of jewellery that their headgear, ears, necks and arms bristle with ornaments. The typical ornament that Hindu women wear is the *dejharoo*, a pair of a sort of gold pendents, hanging on a silk thread or gold chain which passes through holes in the ears pierced at the top end. The *dejharoo* is the Kashmiri Panditani's *mangal-sutra*. Muslim women wear bunches of earrings, the weight of which is supported by a thick silver chain, which also goes over the bonnet. And there are ample bracelets and necklaces. The whole ensemble lends a most artistic effect to the appearance of Kashmiri women.

With the passage of years, an appreciable change has come in the dress of the Kashmiri women. Slowly and imperceptibly they are changing their dress pattern—whatever is in vogue under the impact of modern influences. Saris, *shalwar-kameez*, *churidars* and bell-bottoms are becoming popular, yet none of these belongs to her as much as the good old *pheran*.

People of Jammu

The Dogras, inhabiting the hilly tract bounding the mountains of the Kashmir Valley on the south and extending to the plains of the Punjab, are descended from Aryan stock. They speak the Dogri language—a mixture of Sanskrit, Punjabi and Persian—whose origin goes back to the Indo-Aryan branch of Sanskrit. A sturdy people, the Dogras, are divided into several castes and sects. A common attribute of the Dogras of various denominations is their physical hardiness. Their staple food consists of rice, wheat and pulses. Their dress is simple—a short coat or a flowing shirt, with pyjamas loose at the knees and

tight-fitting at the ankles. The turban on the head is generally complemented by a *kamarband* at the waist. A shawl or *dupatta* thrown over the head, the women put on tight-fitting bodice or jumpers over pyjamas which resemble those of the menfolk.

The Dogra Rajputs, who have traditionally made the Army their profession, do not, however, have a big build, their average height being five feet four inches. Though not masculine, they are active to the point of being indefatigable and can stand long marches over hilly terrain. The men's complexion is light brown, the women's lighter still. A simple and almost child-like people, Dogras tend to be traditionally clannish, more so in the rural areas. The Brahmins of the Jammu province are mainly engaged in agriculture. A minority among them comprises the priest class. The Chibbalis and the Sudans—the chief sects among the Muslim Rajputs—are also a martial race.

Distinct and remarkable, Dogra cuisine complements the people's achievements as soldiers, painters and builders of temples and forts. The dishes are delicious, with abundant nutritive value. One of the daintiest of Dogra dishes is *Auria*, made from yoghurt and potatoes. Like the *Ambal*, the sour broth containing gourd, potatoes, meat and sweet-roots, *Auria* is taken with boiled rice. Other Dogra specialities are *Ghiwar*, a sort of bread fried in ghee, *Thothru*, well-kneaded fermented balls cooked in boiling ghee with almonds, and *Mukand Bari*—dried wheat flour pieces also fried in ghee. The culinary art of Dogras, in demand throughout India, is recalled in the popular saying : "As the food, so the mind."

Through the Basohli school and other paintings, Dogras have made a notable contribution to the development of painting in India. From the 16th to the 19th centuries, the hill states of Jammu produced works of art which were closely connected with other schools of India. Basohli emerged as a great centre of painting early in the 18th century. Many of the paintings gave pictorial expression to the Bhakti movement; some were Saivistic in theme. Outstanding paintings of this school depict Krishna's frolics, scenes from the *Ramayana* and other scrip-

tures. The Basohli paintings in "laughing colours" evince a remarkable blend of line and colour. They have been characterised as "poems in colour" for their extraordinary lyrical quality. No wonder then that Dr Herman Goetz described Basohli paintings as "the great achievements of Indian, nay, of hnman art".

The Dogra dynasty, founded by Gulab Singh, provided a great fillip to painting and the arts. Temples, built by the dozen, were embellished with priceless paintings and murals. Religious themes continue to inspire some artists of the province, who draw their inspiration from the Dogra Art Gallery, Jammu, containing Basohli and other paintings, manuscripts and archaeological finds.

Jammu province is inhabited by diverse races. Khatris and Mahajans are of Punjabi stock. They are less handsome than the Rajputs and are not hardy like them. They mostly follow sedentary occupations like trade and commerce. Harijans comprise another large segment of the population. They are agriculturists, and pursue semi-skilled professions, including those of cobblers and scavengers.

Strong-muscled, virile, simple and truthful, the Paharis inhabit the hilly tracts of the 'middle mountains'. Theirs is a hard life, rearing sheep and cultivating the sparse available tracts of land on hilly, slopy terraces for barley, wheat and maize. This area also supplies a considerable number of recruits to the Army. Lack of communications with the outside world has isolated them and contributed to their comparative poverty, as well as their remaining untouched by what are called by them "the vices and vulgarities of towns". Their hospitaility is exemplary—to them the sale of milk, butter, milk-products and cooked food is taboo, for these are to be freely offered to guests. Frugal in habits, their diet is simple and spase—wheat bread with whey and lentils. Their language is a mixture of Dogri, Punjabi, Hindi and some Sanskrit. Generally dressed in grey woollens and loose pyjamas, they also flaunt a *kamarband*. Women wear long, loose tunics, close-fitting

churidars and *dupatta* or cap to complete their charming ensemble. The Kashmiris who have immigrated into this region have adopted the same dress and speak a mixture of Pahari and Kashmiri dialects.

The Dogras are deeply attached to their land. Much of their folklore—myths and legends—relates to their shrines. Religion also contributes to the mass entertainment of the people in the form of *Ras* dances. The stories of popular heroes like Bawa Jitoo and Bua Began are on the lips of the people. The Dogras are justly proud of their glorious contribution to India's military history in having extended the country's frontiers many thousands of miles further north to the very borders of Central Asia and Tibet.

The physical features of a Kishtwari are unmistakably those of an Indian—dark complexion, thick protruding lips and broad noses, akin to Dravidians. There is evidence that the Dravidians had penetrated these inner mountains of the Himalayan range before the advent of the first Aryans. Isolated pockets like Kishtwar were not overrun by the Aryans. In the upper strata of society, however, there is some racial mixture, resulting in finer features and lighter complexions. The Kishtwaris, generally, are short-statured, simple and unsophisticated but very hardly. They are sure-footed mountaineers. Guileless and credulous, they are superstitious. Witchcraft prevails among some of them. The people speak the Kishtwari dialect, which is a mixture of Dogri and Kashmiri.

Ladakhis

The people of Ladakh region have Mongloid, or, more accurately, Turanian cast of features. In spite of a rigorous climate and formidable and inhospitable landscape, the people have a cheerful disposition and are essentially peace-loving. Fa Hien referred to them as "Men of the snowy mountains". According to the 1971 census, the population of Ladakh was estimated at 1,05,000. 55 per cent of Ladakhis are Buddhist by faith and the rest are Muslims. Amongst the latter is a sprinkling of Muslim

immigrants from Yarkand, Sinkiang and the Kashmir Valley.

The Buddhists of Ladakh prefer to call their religion Lamaism—which is much the same as Mahayana (or Great Vehicle) form of Buddhism. Lamaism is supplanted on the indigenous cults and beliefs. It has also been adopted for the socio-religious framework. Religion pervades the life of Ladakhis and dominates their life style. On the whole, Ladakhis persist in their conservatism and want to remain free of external influences, though the overall progressive trends in the State are slowly affecting them. The people of Ladakh—known as the "Land of the Lamas"—have a system of dedicating at least one person from each family to priesthood, *i.e.*, to be a Lama. Monastic life imposes celibacy, abstinence and rigorous discipline, affirmed by taking 253 vows. The female monk is called Chomo. Though the Ladakhi Buddhists believe in the Buddha, the Dalai Lama of Tibet is to them the chief spiritual head and the vice-regent of the Buddha on the earth. Monasteries (*gompas* and *chortens*) are to be found everywhere. Prominent with their big, bell-shaped stone structures and metal pinnacles, these monasteries are built on the *samadhis* of Lamas, usually conspicuously on high ground. Lama prayer flags flutter from the housetops of *gompas* and *chortens*, presenting a picturesque spectacle.

Ladakhis call themselves *Bo-pa*—ancient Bhauttas. They speak a Tibetan language, which is more than a dialect of Tibetan. It is written in the Tibetan script. Some scholars, however, aver that their script is a form of Devanagri, which was prevalent in Kashmir in 7th century A.D. Lots of words in the Ladakhi language, especially in religious terminology, are derived from Sanskrit. The printed literature, more so the religious one, is engraved on stereotyped wooden blocks, which, encased in wooden planks, form their 'books'.

Ladakhis are sincere and honest workers though they lack enterprise. About 90 per cent of them depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The barren land can hardly support even their scanty population. Farming is dependent on canal water

for irrigation. The *zho*—the beast of burden, which is a cross between the yak and the cow—is used for ploughing the land. Barley, wheat, buck-wheat, peas, rape-seed and beans are the main agricultural products. Apples and apricots are grown in warmer regions of low altitude.

Another occupation of the Ladakhis is sheep-rearing. The herdsmen are called *chang-pas*. They rear long-haired goats and sheep from whose under-fleece the famous Kashmiri Pashmina shawls are made. *Chang-pas* live in tents and are nomadic, going from place to place in search of pastures.

Ladakhis are keenly interested in trade. Wool, in raw form, is their chief commercial product. The men travel long distances seeking favourable prices for their wares, which consist of salt, dry fruit and cultured pearls and semi-precious stones. In return they get tea, tobacco, grain, sugar, matches and other essential goods from the plains. Women, dressed in their fineries, mind the local business.

Ladakhi men wear long grey woollen gowns fringed with sheep skin and tied at the waist with girdles of blue colour, multicoloured velvet caps, fringed with black fur earlaps. Their women wear colourful clothes. Their special headgear, called *perak*, is made of red cloth or goat-skin and hangs up to the forehead and tapers down to the waist at the back. Brooches of turquoise and other semi-precious stones embellish their headgear, bangles and ear-ornaments.

The staple food of the Ladakhis is *grim*—a kind of barley grown abundantly even at high altitudes—which is eaten as bread, or mixed with butter and tea as a paste. They are invariably meat eaters. A local drink called *chong* is extracted from it.

Polyandry is a common feature among the Ladakhis. The elder brother's wife is the wife of all brothers. The children begotten of such unions have various fathers. Short of emotional strain which modern social impact can have on the complacent wife of multi-husbands, this system has worked well so far, kept the population steady and patrimonial property undivided.

The system is gradually being discarded by the young Ladakhis.

Playing polo on fast racing ponies is the most popular entertainment in Ladakh. It was the Dards of Gilgit (once pure Aryans and Buddhists in the pre-Christian era) who introduced the game in the area. The horse is not changed with each *chukker* (Britishers call it *chukkha*) as in western style polo but each player carries on with the same sturdy pony. Primitive wooden balls are still used for the game—played on rough, uneven pitch—whose popularity persists in Ladakh.

Ladakh offers the hunters' dream-hunts of markhor, ibex, red bear, snow leopard, wild sheep, antelope, gazelle and marmot. Ladakh is also rich in minerals like gold, copper and semi-precious stones. Maybe, the age-old slumber, compounded by the rigours of landscape and climate, has prevented them from unearthing these treasures. Thanks to the impact of the changing events, they are beginning to think that they need to come out of their isolation and be part of the mainstream of life in the State which is buzzing with development activities. This would not affect their spiritual heritage and way of life, which are so dear to them.

Gujjars

The hill people of Kashmir, called Gujjars, are herdsmen by occupation, represented in most parts of Jammu and Kashmir. They are said to be Rajputs who had migrated from Rajasthan and adopted the Muslim faith. They are a well-built, tall race with a prominently Jewish cast of features. Their dialect, Gujjari, is now identified as a form of Rajasthani. They raise sheep and cattle and trek on foot, from the warm regions of Jammu up into the high mountains—where they have their small wooden or mud huts—in search of green pastures. Their nutritions diet consists of maize bread, whey, jungle roots and fruit, no doubt contributing to their remarkable vitality and longevity. Despite poverty and the rigours of their life, they are disposed to look upon the sunny side of life. The instinct to cohere is strong in them. Members of the family are knit

…r by common goal and their nomadic occupations.

…STIVALS IN KASHMIR

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In August, just eight days after *Rakhi*, falls *Janam Ashtami*, the birthday of Lord Krishna. Hindus fast on this day, hold religious meetings to diffuse the teachings of the *Gita*. The *Ras Leela* (operatic dance) of Lord Krishna is staged at some places. Music and dancing continue till moonrise, the traditional time of the birth of the Lord.

Kashmiris are proud of the Vitasta (the Jhelum river) and they love it. On *Vaitha Truvah* day they offer prayers to it. Earthen lamps are set afloat on the river, each balanced on a grass-ring. To watch the broad expanse of the river, bedecked with floating and flickering lights, is a captivating, memorable spectacle.

Diwali, the festival of lights, provides an occasion for the *Puja* of the new moon of *Kartik* (October-November). Hindus' houses and business premises are tastefully decorated and illuminated. Shopkeepers close their year's ledger and start the new financial year.

The Muslim festival, *Muharram*, marks the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the Prophet's grandson, who was murdered at Karbala. Huge *taziyas* made of paper and wood are taken out in procession. The mourners chant funeral hymns.

The birthday of Guru Nanak Dev in November is a very auspicious day for the Sikhs. They go to *Chati Patshahi* near Hari Parbat. Epistles from the *Granth Sahib* are recited throughout the day with occasional breaks when *prashad* is distributed.

On the tenth of *Asvin* (September-October) *Dussehra* is celebrated to commemorate the victory of Lord Rama, the epic hero, over Ravana, the demon king. Effigies of Ravana and his condemned tribe are burnt at sunset and people of all communities come to watch the spectacle.

Guru Govind Singh's birthday falls in the month of December. The Guru's chivalrous deeds are recounted in song to infuse his spirit into the Sikhs.

A typically Kashmiri festival known as *Kichri Amavasya* falls in the month of *Posh* (December-January). Kashmir was the abode of *Yakshas* in ancient times. The *Yaksha* Lord is

invited to relish *khichri* (rice cooked with dal and ghee). It is believed that during the night the Lord comes and tastes the *khichri* served neatly in the attic.

In the month of *Magh* (January-February) comes the *Gori Trai.* The myth goes that Parvati and Shiva were betrothed on this day. The family priest brings gaudy scroll paintings for the children. Saraswati Puja is offered on the day.

Throughout northern India, *Basant Panchmi* heralds the spring season, but in Kashmir cold winter still predominates. Bird-loving Kashmiris cook yellow rice, prepare small balls of it and throw them on the roof for crows and other birds.

The *Shiva Ratri* festival falls in February-March. It lasts for about a fortnight. Hindus spring-clean their houses during this fortnight, wear new clothes, and buy utensils. Women go to their parents' homes to get the 'festival money', as they call it. Three days before the festival, the worship of Shiva and Parvati starts. It is said that Shiva and Parvati were wedded on *Shiva Ratri.* The offerings in this worship are walnuts soaked in earthen utensils. The four parts of the kernel represent four *yugas*. After some days people are seen carrying baskets containing these nuts to be distributed among relatives and friends.

Kashmiris are simple and superstitious. The manner in which they celebrate their festivals is as distinctive as their beautiful valley is unique.

JAMMU PROVINCE

The people of Jammu Province are fun-loving. This trait of theirs is seen at its best during the celebration of festivals. The *Bikrami* (Indian) calendar for them is a long procession of fairs and festivals, which enliven social life and bring people of all communities together. The *Lori* festival, marking the culmination of the cold season, is celebrated with zest everywhere. Children g o from door to door to collect subscriptions for the community bonfires. When the fires are lit at night, the young and old gather round the flaming fires throwing parched

grain, coins and other offerings into these with gusto. Gay dancing at the venues goes on for hours.

On the occasion of the *Holi* festival, Muslims and Sikhs join Hindus in spraying friends with pails of coloured water. The spring festival, replete with revelry, lasts three days in the cities and villages.

The Vaishno Devi shrine, dedicated to goddess Shakti, is perched on a hill, about 54 km from Jammu city. It has been the cynosure of pilgrims from all over India since ancient times. The *Navratri* festival occurs when Jammu is crowded with pilgrims on the way to or returning from the shrine. The city wears a festive look with pilgrims carrying staves and wearing *mauli* (yellow and red thread), garlands and amulets.

Melas (fairs) are also held in the city and the principal towns on *Baisakhi* or New Year's Day. Hindus bathe in the sacred rivers, streams and springs. Rejoicing and fun follows the devotional rituals in the morning. *Bhangra* and other dances rendered by troupes are enjoyed by the people in the evening.

Processions are taken out on the *Ram Navami* festival—the centre of attention being tableaux presenting scenes from the *Ramayana*. Besides offerings to and worship of the deity at the famous Raghunath temple in Jammu, discourses on the *Ramayana* are given there on all nine days.

Shivaratri is a three-day festival in Jammu and is celebrated with eclat at Purmandal, Billawar and Jhandi. The Shiva temples dotting the province are crowded with people for three days. The shrine of Shiv Khori is visited by pilgrims on this occasion. The dark half moon night of *Chaitra*, called *Chaitra Chadish*, is the date for popular festivals at spring and river shrines, like Gupt Ganga and Purmandal. *Diwali* is a gay occasion in the province, as in the rest of India. Rows of gay lamps are lit in streets and homes and sweets distributed.

Guru Ravi Das's birthday is celebrated with great enthusiasm in Jammu city. Leaders of different communities pay tributes to

this great man who belonged to a backward community but won the esteem of all because of his spiritual eminence. Public meetings follow *kirtans* and *bhajans*. Likewise, the Gurpurabs, Guru Nanak's birthday, *Navroz* and *I'd* are celebrated, providing opportunities for the expression of good fellowship among the various communities and castes. Buddha Jayanti, Mahavir Jayanti, Gandhi Jayanti and Christmas are also celebrated here as in other parts of the country.

Tihar is an interesting festival observed in Bhadarwah and Kishtwar in the months of *Chaitra* (March-April). Springs and *baulies* receive a spring cleaning and this is followed on the next day by worship of *Nagas* (serpents), to whom rice and floral offerings are made. *Samkrant* or the beginning of a month (in Bikrami era) is regarded as a sacred day by Hindus. Women bathe in rivers in the small hours and observe a day's fast. People in Ramban and nearby villages specially observe *Singh Samkrant*, the first of Bhadoon month, with a bath in the river Chenab (also called Chandrabhaga) in the morning, offering flowers to the sacred river. On this day, a bath in this sacred river is held to be as meritorious as the one in the Ganga at Hardwar. According to J.N. Ganhar[1], "local tradition traces the origin of the festival to the time of the Pandavas about 3500 years ago".

LADAKH

In spite of the climatic rigours of Ladakh, the people are full of life and mirth, and celebrate festivals with music dance and song. Myths and legends revolve round the gods and fairies, as well as magic, mysticism and romance. There are festivals that herald spring and coincide with harvesting. Dance and song —symbolical and interpretative as in India—are spontaneous and unfettered by rigid rules, though lacking in systematized idiom.

[1]J.N. Ganhar; *Jammu Shrines and Pilgrimages*, Ganhar Publications, New Delhi, 1975.

Ladakhi peasant women dance to the accompaniment of Mon musicians, playing clarinets shaped like the Indian *shehnai*, a round-topped drum and cymbals. The dancers form a group, traversing circles, opening and closing the right hand in the gesture of a bud blossoming, comparable to a Rajasthani spring dance. The accompanying song, pregnant with a sweet melody, runs as follows:

> I know a path that leads into the hills,
> Where flowers are watered by many little rills,
> There lives the spirit of La (Pass),
> He was a prince once, now he is a Sta (horse),
> There grows the sweetest greenest grass.
> I know a path that leads towards the river,
> Where pebbles shine like stones of silver,
> There lives no spirit but a princess,
> So small, so wise and so priceless,
> And, there is sweet music, but no sweet green grass.

Ladakhis, a simple, friendly people, have a song for every mood and moment. They sing while working in the fields, cutting grass or spinning. A peasant marriage is a special occasion for song and dance. The Mon musicians also play during the fast game of polo, which adds to the entertainment of the people. In an amusing playlet, an entire game of polo is enacted with little wooden hobby horses. The comic acting is rendered without words, only loud music boosting the champions, to the glee of the onlookers.

The famous mystery plays of the monasteries are played during the great Spring Festival and Fair. The mystic dance is performed by the Lamas, who are dressed in elaborate brocade costumes, some wearing masks of animals, or typifying legendary human, semi-human or demoniacal characters. The dancers whirl in frenzied movements, depicting the triumph of Good (Buddhism) over Evil. The demons struggle for the human soul until the denouement when the entry of the 'enlightened

one' brings about their defeat. The 'devil dances', as these are popularly called, are important in the social life of Ladakhis. A gay community, Ladakhis entertain themselves with songs and dancing, on festive and other occasions, to a greater extent than any other people in India.

CHAPTER II

SOURCES OF KASHMIR HISTORY

KASHMIRIS who distinguished themselves in most branches of Sanskrit learning were also good historians, and left almost continuous written records of the history of the Valley. Kalhana, 12th century poet-historian, who wrote the *Rajatarangini*, mentioned about 11 earlier chronicles, which he had consulted. Besides, there is extant a good collection of records and traditions as well as archaeological and numismatical evidence. The knowledge of the ancient and medieval history of Kashmir, secured from these sources, is bolstered by the accounts of foreign travellers who visited Kashmir from time to time.

The name of Kashmir does not occur in Vedic literature. Some of the *Puranas*, however, refer to the 'Kasmiras' in the list of northern nations. Varahmitra (500 A.D.) includes the 'Kasmiras' in the north-eastern division in the *Brahtsamhita*. Sri Harsha in his *Rainavali* mentions the saffron of the 'Kasmira' country. The earliest note on Kashmir by foreigners occurs in the writings of the Greek geographer, Hecataeus (500 B.C.), who refers to 'Kaspapyros', a city of the 'Gandarians'. A Chinese record (541 A.D.) refers to a country "enveloped on all sides like a precious jewel by the snowy mountains."

Hiuen Tsang, who visited the Valley in the year 631 A.D., records the conversion of the people to Buddhism by Majjahantika. The annals of the T'ang dynasty mention the arrival of an embassy from the Kashmirian king T chen-to-lo-i-li in the Chinese court about 713 A.D. The Chinese pilgrim, Ou-kong, visited Kashmir in the middle of the 8th century A.D. Describing Kashmir as a kingdom surrounded by mountains on all sides, Ou-kong gives the routes intersecting the mountains.

leading to Tibet in the east, Baltistan in the north and Gandhara in the west.

Muslim travellers also wrote on Kashmir but the information on historical geography that can be gleaned from these source is meagre. What Al-Masudi, Al-Qazwini and other Arab geographers wrote about Kashmir is surpassed in content and scope by Alberuni whose *Kitab-ul Hind*[1] presents an accurate account of the Valley. What he writes about the men and manners and arts and crafts of Kashmiris is confirmed by Sanskrit sources of the period. The fortress of 'Lauhur' mentioned by him has been identified by Aurel Stein as the fortress of 'Lohara'—the 'Loharakotta' of the *Rajatarangini*. Alberuni also describes 'Rajawari', which is the capital of the hill state of Rajapuri having the same name, and is mentioned in Kalhana's Chronicle.

Nilamatpurana is the earliest known (and extant) text of Kashmir. It contains the sacred legends regarding the origin of the Valley, the rites and worships prescribed by Nila—the lord of Kashmir Nagas—and descriptions of various *tirthas* (places of pilgrimage), which have greatly helped in reconstructing the ancient geography of Kashmir. Among the texts dealing specially with the sacred sites is the *Haracharitachintamani* of Jayadratha. Then there are 50 and odd *Mehatmyas* on the important *tirthas*, which besides describing the location and importance of the places of pilgrimage provide information about the historical topography of the Valley. Kalhana refers to *Nilamatpurana* as among his sources of information. Kshemendra, the polyhistor in his *Samayatrika*, also provides some useful information about the topographical details of Kashmir. Kalhana refers to his other work, *Nrapavali*, which portrayed the socio-political life of the Kashmiris of his time.

KALHANA AND THE 'RAJATARANGINI'

The *Rajatarangini*, or the "River of Kings", by Kalhana

[1]In Chapter 18 of his book, *India*.

Pandit is the earliest extant history of Kashmir. A unique historical poem, written between 1148 and 1150 A.D., the *Rajatarangini* contains valuable political, social and other information pertaining to Kashmir and the rest of India. In the words of H.C. Rawlinson, it is "Hindu India's almost sole contribution to history." Among the extant works of Sanskrit literature, Kalhana's Chronicle stands out for its comparatively exact chronology. It has also offered the key for fixing the dates of many Indian scholars who wrote literary and philosophical works. Indeed, the Chronicle has contributed a good deal to the reconstruction of ancient Indian history.

Facts regarding Kalhana's person and contemporary life have been gleaned from his narrative by patient research. His father, Champaka, was a Kashmiri nobleman, who held the office of Lord of the Gate (*Dvarpala*), or, commandant of the frontier defences, during the reign of the ill-fated king Harsha. Kalhana's ancestors were devout Shaivites, but he showed the deepest regard for Buddhism. The major portion of Kalhana's life passed in, what was for Kashmir, one long period of civil war and political strife. The commencement of the twelfth century brought an important dynastic revolution in Kashmir which affected the political life of the country. King Harsha, whose reign (1089-1101 A.D.), initially secured prosperity and peace, became a victim of his own Neroian disposition. The landed aristocracy of the Damaras, harshly persecuted by him, rose in revolt against the king. Harsha was killed. The usurping brothers, Uchala and Sussala, partitioned the country. In his chronicle Kalhana speaks admiringly of his father, Champaka, though he does not share the latter's affection for his royal master, Harsha.

Kalhana as Historian

Kalhana did not belong to that order of Brahmin Pandits or *kavis* who were compelled by poverty or ambition to lay their talents at the feet of vain monarchs. Kalhana's Chronicle is neither Voltaire's *History of Russia* nor Gibbon's *Decline and*

Fall of the Roman Empire. His was not only a serious contribution to history, it was pre-eminently a work of art (*kavya*). He looked upon himself not merely as a historian but also as a *kavi*, a seer-poet. He considered poetry as an effective vehicle for the attainment of "special immortality", and paid glowing tributes to poets. R.S. Pandit[1] compared Kalhana to Aeschylus and Homer, "as a poet of veracity and universality".

In Kalhana's pen picture, the past of Kashmir is gloriously vivified and re-created. It is his skill as a *kavi*—the merit of his poetic composition—which has saved the history of Kashmir from oblivion. A *Kavya* (a *charita* or heroic poem) in form and conception, the *Rajatarangini* consists of about 8,000 verses classified under eight *Tarangas* (waves). It is, however, different from other *Charitas* because Kalhana has offered a connected narrative of the ruling dynasties of Kashmir from the earliest times down to his own. He embellished the Chronicle with occasional elaborate rhetorical ornaments.

As a chronicler, Kalhana preserved independence of judgement. He did not hesitate to point out the errors or weaknesses of the kings under whom he wrote. Kalhana emphasises striking examples of Kashmir history by reference to similar instances narrated in the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*. At the same time, the poet's love of the Arcadian vale of Kashmir, abounding in nature's mysterious charms, is revealed in many an inspired passage.

[1] "It is history and it is a poem, though the two perhaps go ill together. . . It is a story of medieval times and often enough it is not a pleasant story. There is too much of palace intrigue and murder and treason and civil war and tyranny. It is the story of autocracy and military oligarchy . . . it is a story of the kings . . . indeed the very name is the 'River of Kings' . . . It was a time when the old economic system was decaying, the old order was changing in Kashmir as it was in the rest of India. Kashmir had been the meeting ground of the different cultures of Asia, the western, Graeco-Roman and Iranian and the eastern Mongolian, but essentially it was a part of India and the inheritor of Indo-Aryan traditions . . ."

—Jawaharlal Nehru, in his Foreword to R.S. Pandit's English translation of the *Rajatarangini*. Indian Press Ltd., Allahabad, 1934.

Proper dates are given by Kalhana from the death of Cippata Jayapida (813 A.D.) onwards. He follows the calendar used in the Lankika era which had been used in Kashmir for many centuries. Historical events are shown to illustrate political maxims and precepts of diplomacy. The passages in which Kalhana gives in brief the principles of government adapted to Kashmir are particularly interesting.

The Books

There is no doubt that the extant text of the Chronicle is in the main the very same as Kalhana left it. Kalhana tells us that he began his work in the *Shaka* year 1070, i.e., 1148 A.D., and he finished it in 1149 A.D. The record in the first three books covers an aggregate period of 3050 years and consists for the most part of bare dynastic lists of fifty-four reigns, in the midst of more or less legendary traditions and anecdotes.

The first historical name in the Chronicle is that of king Ashoka—attested by Ashoka's famous pillar inscriptions. The historical existence of king Pravarasena, the founder of Srinagar, is borne out by his coins.

Among the Karkota kings, Muktapada Lalitaditya (699-736 A.D.) shines forth as a very powerful monarch whose sway extended far beyond Kashmir and adjacent territories. Kashmiris credit their king with having been victorious over the Turks. Lalitaditya's later conquest of the Bhauttas (or Tibetans) has been verified through Chinese annals. He led expeditions against the states of Kanyakubja (Kanauj), Kalinga (Orissa), Kamboja (Afghanistan) and Ganda (Bengal). Kalhana describes him as the 'illustrious' emperor, 'the terrestrial Indra'.

Kashmir celebrated Lalitaditya's victories for centuries and, with pardonable exaggeration called him the universal monarch. Jayapida, fifth descendant of Lalitaditya, however, made a serious attempt to regain the lost supremacy of Kashmir. His romantic adventures took him to Bengal. He too set out for 'the conquest of the earth'.

With the accession of Avantivarman (855/6-883 A.D.) we enter that phase of Kashmir history of which the chronicler gives a truly historical record. The memory of Avantivarman is still kept green by the ruins of the temples at Avantipur—the town founded by the King. With Avantivarman's son and successor, Sankaravarman (883-902 A.D.) begins the line of kings whose reigns are evidenced by an unbroken series of coins.

The Tantrin soldiers, the Praetorian Guard of Kashmir, became all-powerful during the first quarter of the tenth century of the Christian era. The kingdom was a scene of misery and calamities. The Tantrins made and unmade kings at their pleasure. The court was corrupt and dissolute. The Tantrins were defeated by Chakravarman who regained the throne for the third time. In 950 A.D., in the person of Kshemagupta, once again Kashmir had a rapacious and licentious monarch. He married Didda, daughter of Simharaja, the chief of Lohara, and thereby changed the course of history of Kashmir. Didda ruled—first as Queen Mother and then as Queen, after Kshemagupta's death. Driven by the lust of power, she ruled Kashmir with an iron hand for twenty-three years. Though cruel, unscrupulous and dissolute, she possessed statesmanlike sagacity and administrative ability. She was succeeded by the House of Lohara, the new dynasty, which continued to hold Kashmir as well as its original home till the time of Kalhana and later.

About half of the Chronicle (comprising nearly 3, 450 *shlokas*) is devoted by Kalhana to the half of the 12th century which lies between the downfall of Harsha and the date of the composition of the Chronicle. This lengthy treatment has the advantage that an authentic contemporary picture of the social, political and economic aspects of Kashmir is presented. The rebel Damaras disturbed the peace of the country. Pretenders rose and fell. The people of Srinagar suffered a desperate siege. Jayasimha ruled over Kashmir with "cunning diplomacy and unscrupulous intrigue". The concluding stanzas of the Chronicle are devoted

to the praise of Jayasimha's queen, Radda Devi, and their children. That takes us to the twenty-second year of Jayasimha's reign, 1149-50 A.D. Kalhana concludes the poem with a verse comparing his Chronicle, the "River of Kings", with the swift current of the Godavari, a river of South India.

The *Rajatarangini* is much more than an account of the reigns of the kings of Kashmir. Kalhana presents an authentic picture of his contemporary social and political life.[1] The Chronicle is a vast mine of information about the past of Kashmir and the contiguous territories. It also contributes to the understanding of the chequered course of the history of Kashmir after Kalhana's day. In Kalhana's own day, his contemporary, Mankha, described Kashmir and Pravarapura (present Srinagar) in the third canto of his *Srikanthacharita*, written between 1128 and 1144 A.D.

During the Muslim period, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470 A.D.) who attracted chroniclers and poets to his court and showed keen interest in Sanskrit—though Persian was the language of the court—had the *Rajatarangini* brought uptodate by the two famous chroniclers of his reign—Jona Raja and Mullah Ahmed, in Sanskrit and Persian, respectively. The greater portion of Jona Raja's Chronicle, *Rajavali*, deals with

[1]Reviewing a paper on Kalhana. Poet-Historian of Kashmir—based on a lecture delivered by the present writer in London on October 14, 1955, and published later by the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore—the *Asian Review*, London (July 1957) observed: "Well-known Western scholars like Buhler, Wilson and Cunningham have analysed the material as furnished by Kalhana as the foundation of the history of Kashmir". The reviewer of the *Times Literary Supplement* (3.8.19) characterised the *Rajatarangini* as "unique in Sanskrit literature" in that "its chronology and data are more or less accurate". K.P.G. of the *Eastern World*, London (July 1957) opined: "To well intentioned people unaware of the extent to which Kashmir has always been an integral part of India, this study of Kalhana is a valuable reminder. Professor Dhar's lecture illuminates the continuity of past and present in the relations between Kashmir and India". These foreign quotes underline the importance that is attached by historians abroad to Kalhana's Chronicle.

the reigns of the later Hindu rulers from Jayasimha to Queen Didda, thus taking the story to 1459 A.D. His pupil Shrivara resumed the thread in *Jaina-Rajatarangini* and in four chapters chronicled the events from 1439 to 1486 A.D., following Kalhana's style. More than a century later, the *Rajatarangini* was again updated, during the rule of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, who also showed equal respect for classical Sanskrit literature. The task was entrusted by Akbar to Prajya Bhatta in 1575 A.D. The fourth Chronicle after Kalhana, Praja Bhatta's work was called *Rajavalipataka*, and ended with the year 1513-14 A.D. Completed by his pupil, Shuka, after the annexation of Kashmir by Akbar (1586 A.D.), the work has been rated as inferior in composition to Shrivara's Chronicle. Jahangir commissioned Haider Malik (in 1617 A.D.) to bring out an abridged edition of the *Rajatarangini* in Persian.

Though the later chroniclers, in continuing Kalhana's work underlined the importance of his Chronicle, their products lacked the literary merits of the *Rajatarangini*. They were, however, more clear and perspicuous than Kalhana. Since Persian was in vogue, Mulla Ahmed's translation of the *Rajatarangini* (named *Bahr-ul-Asman*) and Haider Malik's history were written in Persian. Narayan Kaul Ajiz, a Persian scholar and litterateur, followed Haider Malik to write *Twarikh-i-Kashmir* (History of Kashmir) in 1710 A.D. Abul Fazal's *Akbar-Nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* constitute a mine of information, about history, geography, administration, antiquities, arts, industries, etc. of Kashmir. Jahangir's *Tuzk* contains excellent descriptions of Kashmir, the land he loved so much. Under the rule of later Mughals, Muhammad Azam Kaul wrote *Waquat-i-Kashmir*, completing it in 1746 A.D. after 11 years. His son, Khwaja Muhammad Aslan, made additions to the history.

Not much information is available about Kashmir under the Afghans (1752-1819 A.D.). The Sikh regime that followed for 27 years (1819-1846 A.D.) was well covered by a number of European travellers. Notable among these and other European travellers are Father Jerome Xavier (who accompanied Emperor

Akbar to Kashmir), Francis Bernier (who came to Kashmir with Aurangzeb), Desideri (November 1714), George Forester (1783) and Vigne (1835—during Sikh rule). Drew, Laurence and Cunningham visited Kashmir after the Valley had come under Dogra rulers and under the suzerainty of the British India Government[1]. A detailed survey of the State's history, geography, physical features, antiquities, ethnology and composition of the people was conducted. The latest connected accounts of Kashmir's history are to be found in the works of P.N.K. Bamzai[2] and Prem Nath Bazaz[3]. An interesting account of Kashmir in the last decades of the 19th century was penned by Walter W. Lawrence. Alexander Cunningham's survey of the old Hindu ruins threw light on the history of the old structures mentioned in the Chronicles of Kalhana and the historians who followed him. Excavations at various sites yielded evidence, providing significant data on historic and prehistoric periods of Kashmir. The numismatic evidence—in the shape of ancient gold, silver, copper and brass coins—has furnished evidence of a chain of kings, as mentioned by Kalhana and other chroniclers, up to the modern times.

[1]Walter W. Lawrence: *The Valley of Kashmir*, London, 1895.
[2]P.N.K. Bamzai: *A History of Kashmir*, Delhi, 1962.
[3]Prem Nath Bazaz: *History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, New Delhi; 1954.

CHAPTER III

ANCIENT HISTORY

The ancient history of Kashmir is 'wrapped up in mystery'. An interesting legend, however, persists. According to mythological traditions—corroborated by geological evidence—the Valley of Kashmir was originally a vast lake, whose level was hundreds of feet higher than the bed of the Valley. The name of Kashmir (Sanskrit: *Ka*, water, and *shimira*, dessicate) variously means 'Land dessicated with water,' or (*Kas* channel and *mir*, mountain), 'a deep trough with rocky walls.'

Nilamatpurana contains the oldest record of the legend referred to by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini*. The legend has it that the lake, Satisar (the lake of Sati, named after Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva) was the favourite resort of Parvati. Lake demons infested Satisar; at their head was Jalodbhava ('the water-born'). They killed and devoured human beings. The sage Kashyapa, grandson of Brahma, heard the stories of distress of the people of Satisar. He did a long penance to relieve the sufferings of the people. His prayer was granted. Goddess Sharika appeared before him in the form of a *Hari*, a myna, with a pebble in her mouth. This she deftly dropped over the demon, Jalodbhava. It grew bigger and bigger, assuming the dimensions of a hillock—the present fort-clad Hari Parbat (the hill of Hari)—which smothered Jalodbhava. With his exit from the scene, his fellow-demons disappeared. The water of the huge lake was drained off at a depression at Baramulla. Kashmir, thus peopled by Kashyapa, was named after him "Kashyapa Mir", which was later shortened into "Kashmir".

There are variations to the theme, in the sense of different legends about the origin of the Valley. According to another

version, it was god Vishnu who slew Jalodbhava with his war-disc. A Buddhist legend is referred to by Hieun Tsang. According to this one, the Buddha's disciple, Madhyantika, was obliged an ingratiated dragon to drain the lake to form the Valley and then the former left 500 monks in Kashmir to spread the message of the Buddha.

The lacustrine origin of the land—the common denominator of the legends—is borne out by geological research. Frederick Drew, the geographer of Jammu and Kashmir[1] says, "the traditions . . . are valuable . . . as showing how in early times some races of mankind had learnt to interpret aright the geological records of the history of their dwelling places."

Thus the spirit, if not the substance of the legends, is confirmed by scientific testimonies. "Even at a height of over 12,000 feet above sea level, I have found fossiliferous limestone, crowded with small corals, crinoid stems and other marine forms," so wrote Dr Neve,[2] who travelled in Kashmir extensively, and who, from this evidence, held that even "lofty peaks may have formed chains of islands" in pre-historic times.

Karewas, the flat lacustrine deposits, are geological formations of the Ice Age. These are extant all over the Valley in two groups, the lower and upper. The lower *Karewas* have yielded fossil remains of *Elephas Hysudricus* indicating the Lower Pleistocene Age. The upper *karewa* beds represent the second inter-glacial age. The discovery of ground and polished stone axes, hoes, pestles and bone implements at the menhir site of Burzahom, 15 km east of Srinagar, point to the neolithic culture. The Burzahom discoveries by De Terra[3] have attained significance as one of the only two megalithic sites in the extreme north-west of the Indian sub-continent. The finds of standing megaliths and prone monoliths at this and other sites have established the theory that there was a Stone Age in Kashmir.

[1]Frederick Drew: *The Jammu and Kashmir Territories.*
[2]Ernest F. Neve: *Things Seen in Kashmir*, Seeley & Co., Ltd. London.
[3]De Terra and Peterson: *Studies on the Ice Age in India.*

The identity and original habitat of these people, however, are still shrouded in mystery. The legend as recorded in the *Nilamatpurana* mentions that people from the south were settled by Kashyapa in the Valley. It could be that the earliest settlers came from the northern parts of Ladakh and Dardistan as well as from the plains of India. Among these, the Indian settlers could not cope with the rigour of the winter climate and used to migrate to the warmer region of Jammu and the Chenab Valley.

The earliest among the races that entered Kashmir from the Punjab and other parts of India were the Aryans. They mixed with the aborigines—as they had done in the Punjab and Northern India—to form one people. The eastern and north-eastern regions of Kashmir were held by the Bhauttas. These are the modern Bhuttas of Ladakh, Dras and the nearby frontier districts.

Kalhana begins his Chronicle (*Rajatarangini*, written, 1148-1149 A.D.) with an invocation to Lord Shiva (proof positive of the prevalence of Shaivism in his time) and praises the earlier historians (mentioning 11 historical works extant at the time) for services rendered by recording past events. He lists five outstanding features for which Kashmir was celebrated:

> "Learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water and grapes:
> Things that even in heaven are difficult to find are common here."

Kalhana does not record the events of the hoary past with any measure of verisimilitude. The *Rajatarangini* opens with the name of the glorious king of Kashmir, Gonanda I ("worshipped by the region, which Kailasa lights up . . .") who ascended the throne in 653 Kali (2448 B.C.)—though the date is disputed by historians. Gonanda was a relative of Raja Jarasanda who fought battles against Krishna; in one of these Gonanda was killed.

Damodara I, the son of Gonanda I, occupied the throne

thereafter. He too led an expedition against Krishna, fought bravely but lost his life. The kingdom passed into the hands of the Pandavas, the five brothers who are the heroes of the *Mahabharaṭa*. (The famous ruins of Martand and other old temples are still called *Pandav-lari*, or buildings of the Pandavas, by the people). The ancient temple on the Shankaracharya Hill is believed to have been built by Sandiman, one of the Pandava kings. The first of these Pandava kings was Haranadev, the son of Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna. One of the Pandava kings of Kashmir was Sundarsena. The beautiful city ot Sandimatnagar is said to have been submerged during his reign by an earthquake, which created the Wular Lake over the capital.

Kalhana mentions eight more kings who had preceded Ashoka. They are Lava, Kusha, Khagendra, Surendra, Godhara, Suvarna, Janaka and Sachinara. Some of these names are associated with founding towns which have been traced.

Despite Kalhana's inaccuracies as to exact chronology, Ashoka's is the first name in the Chronicle that has a genuine historical basis. Kalhana credits him with the foundation of Srinagar. The capital—with 96,000 dwelling houses "resplendant with prosperity"—was situated at Pandrethan (means 'old town'), a short distance from modern Srinagar. He introduced Buddhism into Kashmir and built numerous *viharas* and *stupas.* The land of Shiva, where Shaivism prevailed, to the point of being the dominant creed, became the cradle of Buddhist philosophy, which produced great scholars like Kumarajiva and Nagarjuna.

Ashoka died about 232 B.C. His son, Jaluka, was not so enthusiastic about Buddhism. In fact, he was a devotee of Shiva. He cleared the land of *Malechas* (foreigners), who were probably Indo-Greek hordes and had—according to Kalhana—made incursions into the Valley. After a reign of 60 years, he was succeeded by Damodara, a descendant of Ashoka. He also supported Shaivism. Damodar Udar, a city founded on a plateau in the vicinity of Srinagar, is still known by that name—it is

the site of the Srinagar aerodrome.

Buddhism continued to flourish in Kashmir, despite the setback received by the loss of royal patronage. There was a revival of the faith during the reigns of the three Kushan (Indo-Scythian) kings, Kanishka, Hushka and Jushka, whose identities have been confirmed by coins, manuscripts as well as continued existence of Kanishkapur, Hushkapur and Jushkapur—the cities, respectively, founded by these monarchs. They were also great builders of temples and *viharas* (monasteries), which incidentally bear out the great attainments of Kashmiris in architecture and sculpture—in this case, typical though hybrid Graeco-Buddhist art.

Kashmir figured prominently in the vogue of Buddhism in Kanishka's time, when a historical council of Buddhist divines and theologians was held in a monastery near Srinagar. The council accorded a superior status to the Mahayana School which was thus born in Kashmir and developed from there by scholar-monks and missionaries. The commentaries were deposited by Kanishka in a special stupa. In the words of Dr Radha Kumud Mookerjee, "these valuable records may still exist buried near Srinagar and may be unearthed by some archaeological excavations in the future".

The sway of Buddhism in Kashmir did not last long. The traditional Brahmanic learning, in the form of the Shaivist sect of Hinduism, was revived in the reign of Abhimanyu I. He founded a town named Abhimanyupur (modern Bamyun, a town near Srinagar) where he built a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. Gonanda III—the founder of the Gonanda dynasty—and five of his successors, initiated an anti-Buddhist campaign, which reached its apex in the reign of Nara, the sixth in the line. Four more rulers followed; only their names are known.

The white Hun, Mihirkula, seized the throne of Kashmir in 515 A.D. He is still remembered for his acts of gross cruelty. He favoured Shaivism at the cost of Buddhism. He built a shrine of Shiva near Srinagar. The kings who followed him were good and virtuous. One of the descendants, Gopaditya, is said to

have built the temple on the Gopa hill—now called Shankaracharya in Srinagar.

Another king of note, Parvasena II (who conquered Kashmir in 580 A.D., the date confirmed by Hieun Tsiang), founded Pravarsenpura (shortened to Pravarapura), the site of the present city of Srinagar. He died after ruling the country for 60 years.

The reign of Durlabhavardhana (625-661 A.D.), who established the Karkota dynasty[1], is borne out by his coins. Hieun Tsiang visited the country during his rule and found remarkable religious tolerance prevailing everywhere, Buddhism existing side by side with Hinduism. Pratapaditya II (661-711 A.D.), the son of Durlabhavardhana, ascended the throne after his father's death. He founded a town, Pratapapura, now called Tapar and situated 25 km to the west of Srinagar. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Chandrapida (711-719 A.D.), who is mentioned in the Chinese Annals. Renowned for acts of piety and justice, Chandrapida and his queen founded a number of temples. The rule of Tarapida, the second son of Pratapaditya, for four years (719-724 A.D.), was marked by his cruel and oppressive deeds.

The third son of Pratapaditya, namely, Muktapida, ascended the throne. Better known as Lalitaditya, his reign (724-761 A.D.) was marked by conquests over a considerable portion of the Indian mainland and large tracts of the Central Asian regions, thus recalling the imperial sway of the Mauryas. After subjugating the petty states around the kingdom of Kashmir, he is reputed to have conquered the Punjab, Kanauj, Tibet, Badakshan and nearby territories. Kalhana records that during Lalityaditya's rule, his victories were annually celebrated. Alberuni remarks: "The second of Chaitra is a great festival day in Kashmir in honour of victory of its king over the Turks." Historians have compared him with his contemporaries, Charlemagne the Great and Harun-al-Rashid. He ushered

[1]Karkota is the mythical serpent mentioned in the *Mahabharata*.

in an era of national glory and prosperity in the country.

Buddhism and Hinduism, the two prominent religions of his time, received Lalitaditya's patronage in equal degree. He constructed temples dedicated to the Buddha as well as for Shiva, Vishnu and other gods of the Hindu pantheon. He liberally patronised men of letters. Many famous learned men of India and other countries adorned his court—including great Sanskrit scholars like Vakpatiraja and Bhavabhuti. Lalitaditya was a great builder. He built the world-famous temple at Martand (dedicated to the Sun), whose impressive ruins bear testimony to the splendour of the times. Likewise, his capital city (Parihaspura, now called Paraspur, near Shadipur), presents proof of the massive scale of the architecture. He also built towns to commemorate his foreign expeditions. The Martand temple set the model for the Kashmiri Hindu architecture after Lalitaditya. This structure has remained the high watermark of the building art in Kashmir, even as the Taj Mahal is in the domain of Indo-Muslim architecture.

Though his military exploits have made Lalitaditya a hero to Kashmiris in his and later times, his works for public welfare were no less outstanding. He was the first king of Kashmir to realise that by clearing the bed rocks and silt at Baramulla, the flow of the Jhelum would be quickened, and the water-level of the river would fall in other parts of the Valley. The blocking passages of the Jhelum were cleared and reclaimed and the continual threat of floods abated considerably. He also constructed a number of irrigation canals. Lalitaditya was fond of wine and women. Once, in a drunken fit, he ordered the beautiful city of Pravarsena to be burnt down. His wise ministers managed to save the town by putting haystacks on fire instead. Not satisfied with his military conquests, Lalitaditya set out on new conquests and lost his life during one of these.

Lalitaditya was followed by a succession of weak kings. The power and prestige of the Karkota dynasty were on the wane, until his grandson, Jayapida, ascended the throne, and ruled

for 31 years, towards the end of the 8th century A.D. He too went on conquering expeditions, defeating the king of Kanauj, among others. He built a city, Jayapura, near modern Sumbal. A patron of art and letters, Jayapida himself studied Sanskrit grammar. Among his ministers was Vamana, one of the two authors of the *Kashikavrtti*, the famous commentary on Panini's well-known Sanskrit grammar.

The following half-century witnessed the installations and dethronements of puppet kings. The intrigues of rival factions at the court, which resulted in corruption in high places and oppression of the people, ceased with the coming to power of Avantivarman (855-883 A.D.), who founded the Utpala dynasty. His peaceful and just reign was a period of consolidation, when Kashmir rose once again to great heights in the realms of philosophy, letters, art and architecture.

Batta Kallata—the pupil of Vasagupta, the founder of the Spandasastra branch of Kashmir's Shaiva philosophy—Kavi Ratnakar (authored the *Haravijaya* in 50 cantos) and Anandavardhana (the author of *Dhvanyaloka*) were among the great scholars and poets, who enjoyed Avantivarman's liberal patronage. His able engineer, Suyya, following in the wake of Lalitaditya, drained the Valley by having the blocking boulders removed at Baramulla. The town, Sopur (then Suyyapura), which Suyya built on the banks of the Jhelum, commemorates his name. Suyya also changed the course of the Jhelum so that it flowed through the Wular Lake, thus further relieving the congestion that caused floods.

Renowned for the victories of peace, Avantivarman is well remembered for his founding the city of Avantipura—17 km from Srinagar on the banks of the Jhelum—still called by the same name. Before his accession to the throne, he had built there the shrine of Vishnu Avantisvamin. During his rule, he constructed the temple dedicated to Shiva Avanteshwara. Their ruins, adjacent to the Jammu-Srinagar highway, are among the most imposing monuments of ancient Kashmiri architecture, ranking next to the Martand Temple.

Avantivarman's son, Sankaravarman (883-902 A.D.) had to free himself from the pretenders to the throne before he was firmly in the saddle. He led foreign expeditions to Trisarta (the present Kangra) and Gurjara. These expeditions depleted the royal treasury and Sankaravarman resorted to fiscal exactions and plunder of temples. He is ingloriously remembered for introducing *Begar*—the system of forced labour—for transport and other purposes, which continued, in one form or another, until the beginning of the 20th century.

"From this reign onward, the record is one of a long succession of struggles between the rulers and usurping uncles, cousins, brothers, ministers, nobles and soldiers." During the century, following 902 A.D., the kingship changed hands as many as 18 times. Tantrine, a military caste of uncertain origin, rose to become a power that made and unmade kings. Damaras, the landed aristocracy, also had a big say in the affairs of the State. The people of the Valley secured a temporary respite from civil wars during the short rule of Yasaksara (939-948 A.D.), who was elected to kingship by an assembly of Brahmins.

The next monarch—after two kings—was Kshemagupta (950-958 A.D.), who was a debauch. His wife, Didda, the daughter of Simharaja, the chief of Lohara, became regent on his death, placing his infant son, Abhimanyu (958-972 A.D.), on the throne. The reins of State remained in her hands during this and other regency periods, until she ascended the throne herself on 981 A.D. Altogether, she ruled the country for 50 years, until 1003 A.D., wielding power with strength and quashing rebellions with courage and intrepidity. Unscrupulous and licentious, Didda possessed a lust for power which was compounded only by her political sagacity, courage and administrative ability. The Kashmiris still use the term 'Didda' (or Ded) for mother or a lady who is highly regarded.

Her brother's son, Sangramaraja (1003-28 A.D.) ascended the throne after Didda's death, thus establishing the rule of the Lohara dynasty. The three centuries of the reign of the two Lohara dynasties comprised a period of petty court intrigues,

unrelieved by any notable achievements. It was only King Harsha (1089-1101 A.D.), the last king of the first Lohara dynasty, who turned out to be a striking figure. A man of exceptional prowess, he was a curious combination of a poet and a Bohemian *par excellence*. His luxurious living and merry-making bouts caused a huge wastage of the royal treasures. Kalhana, whose father (as noted in the previous chapter) served at the court of Harsha, had observed the unseemly happenings for himself, for he observed: "When the end comes for embodied beings, the lamp of their intellect drains quickly to the point of extinction." Harsha was displaced by his brother, Uchala, with the help of the Damaras, the feudal landlords.

Uchala, who belonged to another line of the Loharas, thus founded the second Lohara dynasty. He was killed by traitors (Dec. 8, 1111 A.D.), and succeeded by his brother Sussala (1112-1120 A.D.). The palace rot and intrigue continued even in the reign of Jayasimha (the son of Sussala) during whose rule (1128-1155 A.D.), Kalhana wrote the *Rajatarangini*.

The six reigns following Jayasimha, covering a period of about a century and a half, comprised a further period of decay, marked by a succession of rebellious and internecine disturbances. According to Janaraja's *Chronicle*, Hindu rule maintained itself in Kashmir for nearly two centuries.

By the time Sahadeva (1301-20 A.D.) ascended the throne, Islam had entered the Valley and many people had accepted the new faith. Sahadeva a weak-minded king, fled to Kishtwar when Dulchu, a Tartar chief from Central Asia (said to be a descendant of Chenghis Khan) invaded the Valley in 1319 A.D. His minister, Ramachandra, aided by his protege, Shah Mir, a Muslim adventurer from Swat, consolidated the affairs of the state. He was also aided by Rinchin, a fugitive prince from Tibet, who was a Buddhist but who had embraced Islam. He was assisted by Kota Rani, Ramachandra's daughter, who had married Sahadeva. Dulchu's hordes were routed.

Ramachandra assumed the title of king. Rinchin rose in

revolt and defeated and killed Ramachandra. He thus became the first Muslim king of Kashmir. He courted and married Kota Rani. With her counsel, he conducted the affairs of the State justly. Shah Mir became his minister, serving him faithfully. Rinchin ruled for three years and died in 1320 A.D., after sustaining some wounds in an uprising led by Udyanadev the brother of Sahadeva. Kota Rani married Udyanadeva, who became the ruler of Kashmir.

Like Sahadeva, Udyanadeva also fled Kashmir, when Achala invaded the Valley. Kota Rani stayed on and organised the public resistance. Using a clever strategem, she defeated Achala and killed him. Udyanadeva returned to the capital, but he was henceforth a king in name. Kota Rani was the undisputed ruler of the kingdom. She resorted to force to curb warlords and rebellious ministers. When Udyanadeva died in 1338 A.D., she ascended the throne.

Shah Mir who was biding his time to seize the throne staged a rebellion after five months of Kota's rule. Though she was assisted by the Lavanya tribe, Kota Rani lost the day after a long-drawn battle. She surrendered on the explicit condition that she would share the bed and throne with Shah Mir.

Clad in a rich costume, Kota Rani entered the boudoir of Shah Mir. Before he could draw her into his arms, she had stabbed herself. Her death spelled the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY MUSLIM PERIOD

THE ADVENT of the Muslim rule in Kashmir did not coincide with the introduction of Islam. Bulbul Shah, a Muslim Sufi saint from Turkistan, who visited Kashmir during the reign of Sahadeva (1301-1310 A.D.), was the first to propagate Islam in the Valley.[1] The people, who had been groaning under the oppressive misrule and political instability of the later Hindu rulers, abetted by corrupt Brahmins, were attracted towards the simplicity and humane piety of the Muslim divines. The new creed found a fertile soil to grow in, its spread facilitated by the continuing internecine strife among the feudal landlords, and took a firm root in the Valley.[2] (The contribution of Muslim 'Rishis' to the cultural and spiritual heritage of Kashmir has been dealt with in the chapter on Cultural Heritage.)

In this context, it was but natural that Kashmiris welcomed the advent of Shah Mir, though he, hailing from Swat, was a non-Kashmiri. He assumed the name of Sultan Shamas-ud-Din (1339-1342 A.D.), thus founding a Sultan dynasty of Kashmir whose kings ruled Kashmir for 222 years. During his short reign of three years, he endeared himself to the people, conducting the affairs of the State in a statesmanlike manner, after subjugating the Lavanya tribe to restore complete peace to the Valley.

[1] Rinchin, the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir (a convert from Buddhism to Islam) built a mosque, which is still extant in Bulbul Lankar, a locality in Srinagar. His grave exists in the same *mohalla*.

[2] "The shackles of caste had already been broken by the teachings of Buddhism and the general masses of people were slowly but surely converted to the new faith by the Ṣufi *derveshes* who entered the Valley in large numbers from Persia and Central Asia." — P. N. K Bamzai : *Jammu and Kashmir*, Publications Division, New Delhi; 1973.

Among the Sultans who succeeded him, his grandson, Shihab-ud-Din (1354-1373 A.D.) has been called the Lalitaditya of medieval Kashmir. An accomplished general, he sent his armies on expeditions to distant places in India, Tibet, and Afghanistan, flying victorious banners, and, *inter alia*, entering into treaty relationship with Sultan Firoz Tughlak of Delhi. He added Kishtwar and Jammu to the Sultanate. The king had complete confidence in his two Hindu Ministers, Kota Bhatta and Udyashri. Loved at home by his subjects, Shihab-ud-Din established the supremacy of Kashmir in northern India. He built an impressive city on the banks of the Jhelum, naming it Shihab-ud-Dinpura—now called Shadipur. On the foothills of Hari Parbat a beautiful town was constructed and named after Lakshmi, his Hindu consort.

The Sultan was succeeded by his brother, Qutb-ud-Din (1373-1389 A.D.), who led a religious and frugal life like his predecessors and continued the policy of tolerance. He welcomed the second visit of the great Sufi savant from Turkistan, Sayyid Ali Hamdani, which was a landmark in the dissemination of Sufism. The king composed some mystic poems under the pen-name of 'Qutb'.

Sultan Sikandar, his younger son, succeeded Qutb-ud-Din. His rule (1389-1413 A.D.) presented an anticlimax to the previous regime in the persecution of Hindus who were put to the sword by the thousand, unless they accepted Islam; not a few Brahmins fled the country. Ironically enough, Sikandar was egged on in these fanatic deeds by his minister, Saif-ud-Din, who was a recent convert to Islam, his Brahmin name having been Suha Bhat. Accompanied by posses of soldiers, Saif-ud-Din would visit temples and have them demolished. In this vandalistic madness, the great temples at Martand, Vijayeshwari, Sureshwari, etc.—architectural wonders of Hindu Kashmir—were razed to the ground. No wonder Sikandar has been called *Butshikan*—Sikandar the Iconoclast. Be it said to his credit, however, that he remains the first Indian ruler to have abolished the custom of *Sati* among the Hindus.

A campaign, led by Rai Magrey, his minister, culminated in Sikandar's mastery over Ladakh. Sikandar could not keep his date with Timur on the Indus (on March 25, 1399 A.D.) because Timur had left for Samarqand. He sent his son Shahi Khan (later, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin) with presents to Samarqand. He stayed there for seven years, and got interested in the famous arts and crafts of Samarqand, which later proved to be an asset to him.

Sikandar became famous as the builder of mosques, in many cases using the stones and other materials of the demolished temple structures. Among the mosques he built is the big Jami Masjid in Srinagar. Though hardly a literate, he surrounded himself with men of letters, chiefly from Khorasan and Iraq.

Suha Bhat, *alias* Saif-ud-Din, continued as the strong-arm minister in the reign of Sultan Ali Shah (1413-1420 A.D.), the eldest son of Sikandar. The only event of note in his short reign was the loss of Ladakh. He won the confidence of Hindus by his tolerant deeds and appointed Shahi Khan, his brother, as minister after the death of Saif-ud-Din.

SULTAN ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN

Shahi Khan ascended the throne in 1420 A.D. and styled himself as Zain-ul-Abidin (the Glory of the Devout). The people of Kashmir, Hindus and Muslims, who had already noted his abilities, welcomed his debut as the Sultan. Their aspirations were responded in full measure, the Sultan ushering an era of peace and prosperity for Kashmir. He was deservedly called 'Bud Shah' (great king) which title still persists in folklore, with fond connotations. To ensure stability, he reorganised the army; he cultivated amicable relations with neighbouring countries like Tibet, Azerbaijan, Khurasan, Turkistan, etc., and sent ambassadors with presents to these countries as well as to the Sultan of Turkey, the Mamluk of Egypt and the Sharif of Mecca.

The enlightened monarch that Zain-ul-Abidin was, he saw to the quick and efficient dispensation of justice. The code of

laws, duly revised, was engraved on copper plates and exhibited in public places and courts. Crime was ruthlessly suppressed. "Where Sikandar destroyed, Zain-ul-Abidin restored; where the former banished or killed Hindus, the latter recalled them and exalted them".[1] The Pandits, who comprised the bureaucracy were encouraged to return to Kashmir and provided every facility, including religious freedom and civil liberties. Thus, the Kaul and Dhar families came from the plains, headed by Pandit Maheshwar Nath Kaul and Mirza Pandit Dhar.[2]

Zain-ul-Abidin's many administrative reforms embraced revenue assessment which was reduced and land left uncultivated erstwhile was brought under the plough. Numerous canals were constructed and many supplied water to the dry *karewa* lands for the first time. Many bridges were built over the canals; quite a few still exist over the Mar Canal, which the Sultan got dug to connect the Dal with the Anchar lake. He laid out gardens at many places—thus anticipating the garden architecture of the Mughal rulers by nearly two centuries.

Eminent Persian and Arabic scholars along with Pandit scholars, well-versed in Sanskrit, adorned the court of Zain-ul-Abidin. He patronised Jonaraja and Srivara, the famous authors of the later *Rajatarangini*. Soma Pandit chronicled the Sultan's reign in *Zaina Charit*. Bodhi Bhatt translated several Sanskrit works into Persian. It was in the Sultan's time that Persian became the language of the Court. His name will always be written in letters of gold in the annals of Kashmir for his lofty sense of tolerance. He built two temples near Ishbar, the village near which the Mughals later constructed the famous Nishat Bagh.

Having studied the arts and crafts of Samarqand, Zain-ul-Abidin invited master craftsmen from there to train Kashmiris

[1]J. P. Ferguson: *Kashmir—An Historical Introduction.*

[2]The late Shri D.P. Dhar, who rose from a Minister in Kashmir State to the position of Planning Minister at the Centre, was a direct descendant of Mirza Pandit Dhar and Birbal Dhar, who invited Ranjit Singh to Kashmir.

in such crafts as carpet-weaving and papier mâche as well as the manufacture of silk. Kashmiris, who were to acquire unrivalled excellence in these crafts, owe a great deal to the vision of this great monarch. He also patronised musicians and revived the arts of drama and dancing which had languished in the previous regimes. His last years were, unfortunately, beset by a flood and famine, followed by a fratricidal war among his sons. With his death, the power and prestige of the dynasty founded by Shah Mir began to wane. The later kings of the line were puppets in the hands of various powerful clans.

The Sayyids, who had come from Central Asia and Iran, and founded the Sayyid dynasty in Delhi, spilled into Kashmir during the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin, who respected them as they were reportedly direct descendants of the Prophet. Kashmir came under the political domination of the Sayyids, during the period following the Sultan's death. The people rose in revolt under one Saif-ud-Din against the Sayyids. Saif-ud-Din became the prime minister of Sultan Fateh Shah I (1486-1493 A.D.), who tried his best to curb the power of the nobles. Disorder prevailed in the Valley for the next fifty years, worsened by the Shia-Sunni conflicts among the Muslims. The Chaks, a Dardic warrior tribe, had entered Kashmir during Shah Mir's reign. They were Shias and provoked clashes against the Sunnis, the creed prevailing among the majority of Kashmiri Muslims. Kazi Chak, who first ruled the kingdom in the name of a few puppets, became the first Chak ruler in 1561 A.D., but was destined to rule only for three years. The Chaks after him evinced little promise of statesmanship. The only credit that history can give them is that they successfully resisted the attempts of Babur and Humayun to annex Kashmir. When the Shia-Sunni feud again flared up in the closing years of the reign of Hussain (1563-1570 A.D.), the Imperial Government at Agra under Akbar tried to intervene, in order to bring about order in the State.

The romantic but tragic career of Yusuf Shah Chak (1579-1586 A.D.) was the penultimate flicker of the Chaks. Married

to Habba Khatun, the celebrated poetess, Yusuf Shah changed Gulmarg and Sonamarg into holiday resorts. He tried several ruses to ward off the expanding influence of the Mughals under Akbar, but he finally succumbed to the superior forces and strategy of Akbar's generals. He died in a prison in Bihar. His son, Yaqub Shah, tried to hold on to the throne for some time, but his forces were defeated by the Mughal army, under Qasim Khan, at Haripura. The Mughals entered Srinagar in triumph on October 14, 1586. Kashmir, losing its independence, became a province of the Mughal Empire.

CHAPTER V

MUGHALS, AFGHANS AND SIKHS

"AIDED MORE...by intrigue than the force of arms" and taking advantage of the Sunni-Shia conflict raging in Kashmir under the Chak Sultans, Akbar annexed Kashmir in 1586 A.D. His rule over Kashmir lasted 19 years, during which period four *Subhedars* (governors) administered the province.

A glorious chapter in the history of Kashmir began with the reign of Akbar the Great, the noblest figure among the monarchs of medieval India. His first visit to Kashmir (June 1589 A.D.) produced some notable results, including encouragement of several industries, particularly of shawls. His Finance Minister, Raja Todar Mal, who accompanied him, reorganised the revenue assessment so that it fell in line with the system prevalent in the rest of India.

Akbar built Hari Parbat fort in Srinagar on the hill of the same name and the city of Nagar inside the wall, that runs round the hill. The huge project gave employment to people who had suffered in the Chak regime. When the walled city was inaugurated, Akbar participated in the festivities connected with the 'birthday' of the Vitasta (the Jhelum) in the same manner as Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin used to do. The embers of rebellion smouldering amongst the surviving scions of the Chak dynasty were extinguished with the use of stern measures. To strengthen his hold on Kashmir, he married a daughter of Shamas Chak. During his third and last visit to Kashmir, Akbar sent an expedition to Ladakh, despite a severe famine in the Valley, and Ladakh was occupied by Mughal forces. To alleviate the misery of the people, the Emperor sent supplies of grain from Sialkot and Lahore. Akbar's patronage of arts and letters was extended to Kashmir. Mohammad Hussain, an outstanding Kashmiri scholar, adorned Akbar's court.

Akbar was succeeded by his son, Jahangir (1605-1627 A.D.), who had already fallen under the spell of Kashmir. He and his versatile queen, Nur Jahan, visited the Valley several times to escape the heat of the plains. The Emperor's presence prevented any abuse of power by the governors. Kishtwar—the refuge of remnants of the Chaks—was subjugated by Dilawar Khan, one of the governors who is also remembered for gardens and pavilions laid out by him in Srinagar.

A great lover of natural beauty, Jahangir made many pleasure gardens in Srinagar—notably the famous Shalimar (1619 A.D.) and Nishat gardens, off the Dal Lake, and the gardens around the famous springs of Verinag (1620 A.D.) and Achabal, the latter by Nur Jahan. Pari Mahal was built by Dara Shikoh—a son of Shah Jahan—on a hill bordering the Dal Lake to house his school of Sufism and an observatory.

Jahangir attended to the welfare of the people. He abolished vexatious taxes and took steps to stamp out the pernicious custom of Sati which persisted even among some Muslims. In 1627, Jahangir visited Kashmir for the last time, and died on the way back to the plains, his last words being that he wanted "Nothing but Kashmir", where he should be buried at Verinag.

Shah Jahan (1627-1658 A.D.) visited Kashmir four times. Among the nine governors of Kashmir, during his reign, was Prince Murad, who married a Kashmiri nobleman's daughter. One of the *Subhedars* who oppressed the people was removed by the Emperor. *Begar* (forced labour) at the harvesting of saffron, which was a State monopoly, was abolished. Whenever famine broke out, usually following floods, Shah Jahan organised relief from the Punjab.

An outstanding builder among the Mughal emperors, Shah Jahan laid out the gardens at Chashma Shahi as well as the upper terracing of the Shalimar Bagh garden, whose beautiful black marble pavilion is a standing monument to the genius of the architect emperor.

Zafar Khan, one of the governors conquered 'Little Tibet' (Baltistan), where residuary Chaks had been given refuge. He

was a poet. In the preface to a collection of his poems, Zafar Khan mentions a number of Kashmiri poets of the time. Tibet itself was annexed to the Delhi Empire on August 15, 1651, under Ali Mardhan Khan, another governor, who is remembered for having built *serais* (rest houses) on the great Mughal road (traversing Gujarat-Bhimber-Shopian) over the Pir Panchal Pass.

Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D.), the son of Shah Jahan, undid whatever the great Mughals had done in Kashmir, in so far as he extended to Kashmir his policy of religious persecution. He visited Kashmir only once in 1665 A.D. During the 49 years of Aurangzeb's reign, Kashmir was governed by 14 *Subhedars*, most of whom carried on the administration well. Iftakar Khan (1671-1675 A.D.), however, oppressed the Brahmins. Another governor, Ibrahim Khan (1678-1680 A.D.) could not effectively cope with a serious Sunni-Shia clash, for he backed the Shia sect.

The death of Aurangzeb spelled the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. The later Mughals, embroiled in internal dissensions, hardly cared for Kashmiris. Governors appointed by the Mughal emperors would nominate deputies to carry on administration on their behalf. Hindus and Shias were persecuted in the one-year regime of one such nominee, Mir Ahmad Khan (1720 A.D.).

AFGHAN RULE

Things came to a head with Ahmad Shah Abdali establishing supremacy over Afghanistan and making successful forays into north-western India. In 1753 A.D., he established Afghan rule in Kashmir which lasted half a century. In the words of Sir Walter Lawrence, it was "a time of brutal tyranny, unrelieved by good works of chivalry or honour". The Pathan satraps are remembered in the Valley only for their savagery and inhuman treatment of Kashmiris, irrespective of caste or creed. A Persian couplet describing their cruel reign reads: "*Sar buridan pesh in sangin dileasi gul chidan ast.*" (These stone-hearted people

thought no more of cutting heads than of plucking flowers.)

Under Afghan rule, several of the 14 governors tried to sever their connection with Kabul and declare themselves as independent rulers. Raja Sukh Jiwan was the first to assert his independence (1754 A.D.) with the aid of a Kashmiri noble, Abdul Hassan Bandey. The Kashmiris enjoyed a brief respite, until a severe famine in 1755 A.D. A punitive expedition under Nur-ud-Din Bamzai, sent by Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1762 A.D., ended the career of Sukh Jiwan. Nur-ud-Din became the new governor of Kashmir. During the regime of another governor, Faqir Ullah Khan, the persecution of Hindus and Shias was resumed; half the terror-stricken population of Kashmir left the Valley for good.

Later Afghan rulers vied with one another in inflicting cruelties upon the people, particularly the Kashmiri Pandits, the Shias and Muslim Bombas—a warlike tribe. Governor Asad Khan used to tie up the Pandits, two by two, in grass sacks and drown them in the Dal Lake—a locality on the bank of the lake is still called *Bat Mazar* (graveyard of the Pandits). Mir Hazar, another governor, drowned Shias as well as Hindus. And yet there were interesting secular interludes. Several Kashmiri Pandits were appointed to high posts by Afghan governors. Atta Muhammad Khan, the Afghan governor who declared himself independent of Kabul, issued coins in the name of the Patron-saint of Kashmir, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Rishi, who had both Hindu and Muslim votaries.

Meanwhile, the Sikhs had become a power to contend with and the suzerainty of the Kabul rulers on Kashmir became tenuous. In the governorship of Muhammad Azim Khan, Maharaja Ranjit Singh made an infructuous attempt, in 1814 A.D., to invade Kashmir. Azim Khan persecuted Muslims as well as Brahmins who, he thought, had induced Ranjit Singh to attack Kashmir. Mirza Pandit Dhar and his son, Birbal Dhar, who were revenue collectors, conspired to contact Ranjit Singh. Birbal Dhar, helped by Muslim aides, secretly left for Lahore (1818-1819 A.D.), and persuaded Ranjit Singh to

attack Kashmir. The time was propitious as Azim Khan had left for Kabul, along with the major part of Afghan soldiery, and had been succeeded by Jabbar Khan, a mild character. An army, led by Hari Singh Nalwa, Raja Gulab Singh and others, countered Jabbar Khan and his forces at the top of the Pir Panchal, the decisive battle following on the plateau of Shopian, where Jabbar Khan lost the day. Thus, in 1819 A.D., ended the tyrannical and rapacious rule of the Afghans. This was also the end of the 500-year Muslim rule in Kashmir.

Kashmir under the Sikhs

The conquest of Kashmir made an extensive addition to the kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and increased his revenues considerably. During the Sikh rule of 27 years (1819-1846 A.D.) ten governors administered the State, the last two being Muslims. The capital city, called Kashmir during the Muslim rule, was renamed Srinagar.

"The Sikhs", observed Younghusband,[1] "who succeeded the Afghans were not so barbarically cruel, but they were hard and tough masters". It is a historical irony that Birbal Dhar, who had taken the initiative—at considerable personal risk—to invite Ranjit Singh, continued to be a revenue collector in the time of the Sikh governor, Diwan Moti Ram, but was imprisoned on the charge of "misappropriation" of State revenue, and died in prison.

Dewan Moti Ram closed down Jami Masjid at Srinagar, to prevent big congregations of Muslims. But Moti Ram was a kind-hearted man. He restored the confidence of the people in the government by several measures—reinforced, during his second tenure as governor, which ended in 1825 A.D. Another governor, Dewan Kirpa Ram (the son of Moti Ram) erected many fine buildings and laid out pleasure gardens in Srinagar. Fond of boating—his state barges would be rowed by women, wearing jingling bangles—he was nicknamed "*Kirpa Shron*",

[1] *Kashmir*, p. 142.

after the sound of paddles. He led a punitive expedition to Muzaffarabad. His commander, Ganesh Pandit Dhar, sowed the seeds of dissension among the hill chiefs and overcame them successively.

All was not well, however, with Sikh hegemony on the borders of Kashmir during the thirties of the 19th century. Turbulent Afghans drove out the Sikh garrison from Peshawar. Hence the Sikh governors, who had resumed the system of *Begar* (forced labour), also levied huge exactions in the Valley, for they needed huge sums of money to keep the hilly districts under check. To produce these funds, a number of taxes and duties were levied, besides land revenue. G.T. Vigne, a French traveller (1835 A.D.) found Shopian a miserable place and Islamabad "but a shadow of its former self"—these were important trading centres in Mughal times.

Colonel Mian Singh, known in Kashmir as "Colonel Sahib", was the best of the Sikh governors, from 1834-1841 A.D. He reorganised the revenue system, introduced proper weights and had fraudulent middlemen punished. He did his best to revive the trade, industry and agriculture of the Valley. During his regime, the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh took place, followed by a tumultuous war of succession, of which full advantage was taken by Raja Gulab Singh, who had been formally invested as the ruler of Jammu by Ranjit Singh.

Gulab Singh's lieutenant, Zorawar Singh, an able general, conquered Ladakh and Skardu. Zorawar Singh died in one of the battles in the bleak frontier area of the Tibet but before his death he had secured the secession by treaty, ratified by the Chinese and Tibetan governments, of the whole of Ladakh to Jammu.

Gulab Singh's rise to further eminence was aided by the penultimate governor of the Sikh rule, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, a Muslim from Jullundur district who had first been employed by Dewan Moti Ram. Mohi-ud-Din opened the doors of the Jami Masjid at Srinagar to win the goodwill of Kashmiris. He helped the 6,000-strong Dogra army of Gulab

Singh with the commissariat for the expedition to consolidate Dogra hold on Leh, though the measure (including despatch of 10,000 villagers to transport the army baggage) caused acute distress to Kashmiris. He was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din in 1845 A.D.

Meanwhile, Gulab Singh, who had integrated himself with the British, was installed, in January 1846 A.D., as Prime Minister of Punjab State by Maharani Jindan. The defeat of the Sikhs proved the proverbial tide in the affairs of Gulab Singh. By the Treaty of Amritsar (March 16, 1846), which was an adjunct to the Treaty of Lahore, signed on 9th March, 1846, signed between the Lahore Durbar and the British Government, the British made over to Gulab Singh all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies situated to the east of the Indus and west of the Ravi and he indemnified them to the extent of 75 lakh rupees. Thus Kashmir came under the rule of the Dogras in 1846, after 27 years of Sikh rule.

CHAPTER VI

KASHMIR UNDER THE DOGRAS

GULAB SINGH, the erstwhile Raja of Jammu from 1820 A.D., became the Maharaja of Kashmir in 1846 A.D. Though he was recognised as an independent ruler, there was an Article in the Treaty of Amritsar, according to which he was a vassal of the British and had to pay an annual tribute in acknowledgement of their supremacy.

The 'sale of Kashmir' (Gulab Singh paid an indemnity of Rs 75 lakhs to the British) has been the subject of much comment. From the records of the time, it is clear that the British Government were preoccupied with "weakening the Sikh State which had proved itself too strong" and therefore made arrangements by which "Cashmere may be added to the possessions of Gulab Singh, declaring the Rajput Hill States with Cashmere independent of the Sikhs of the Plains". According to Sardar K.M. Panikkar[1], Gulab Singh profited from his sustained diplomacy, remaining neutral in the conflict between the British and the Sikhs: "The cession of Kashmir was the price paid for Gulab Singh's efforts to bring about speedy peace which, if he had thrown in his weight with the Lahore Durbar, would not have been an easy matter to achieve. The ease with which the peace was concluded was due to the agreement reached with Gulab Singh by which Kashmir had already been promised to him". The British were mainly interested in installing Gulab Singh as the nominal ruler of Kashmir because the arrangement provided them a dependable ally in a border region of strategic importance, direct defence of which was an almost impossible task to them at the time.

[1]K.M. Panikkar: *The Founding of The Kashmir State*, London; 1930.

To gain actual possession of Kashmir, Gulab Singh had to fight it out with Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, the last governor. After the Sheikh and his Sikh troops were subdued, Gulab Singh attended to the administration which was in a sad state. He met the leaders of the shawl trade who were heavily taxed in the Sikh regime, and redressed their grievances. He reorganised the revenue and police administration of the Valley. The *Begar* (forced labour) system was also reformed. The most important reform was the rationing of rice to the population of Srinagar.

The British Government did not leave Maharaja Gulab Singh alone to carry out his enlightened reform programmes. Back home, the Empire builders regretted the Amritsar Treaty as a silly blunder. The British functionaries in India tried to pressurise Gulab Singh into accepting a British resident at his Court, so that they could have a say in his frontier affairs. Ultimately, a special British Officer was posted at Srinagar. Maharaja Gulab Singh, however, remained the master of the State and suppressed a rebellion in the frontier outposts of Chilas with an iron hand, though his general did not succeed in Gilgit, and the territories to the right of the Indus were lost. In February 1856, Gulab Singh installed his son, Ranbir Singh as ruler of Jammu and Kashmir. His achievement—the only Indian ruler to have extended the frontiers of India to their natural boundary—lay behind Gulab Singh,[1] as he took voluntarily to a secluded life.

Ranbir Singh (1857-1885 A.D.), who had already been trained in the arts of peace and war, proved a worthy successor to the ruler of the largest princely state of India. Like his father, Ranbir Singh attempted to introduce a number of reforms in the administration of the State.

[1]"When Ranjit Singh died in 1839 A.D., Gulab Singh was easily the most influential personage in the Sikh Empire and was its chief feudatory. In the years that followed (1840-1842 A.D.), he conquered Baltistan and Western Tibet, and added to the geographical boundaries of India an area such as no ruler in the past had ever done . . ."—K.M. Panikkar, *Ibid.*

A patron of arts and letters, Ranbir Singh encouraged research and collected a good library of Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts. An era of modernism in education was ushered in through the opening of schools. The Raghunath Temple at Jammu—the complex is a landmark—and other temples bear testimony to his zeal for Hindu religion. In a sectarian disturbance, when Shias were attacked and looted by the Sunnis, he gave adequate compensation to the victimised Shias. The Maharaja was "liked by the people."

Despite nagging interference from the British in the Frontier affairs of Kashmir, Maharaja Ranbir Singh's forces reconquered Gilgit and the principality was permanently annexed to Jammu and Kashmir.

Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925 A.D.), the eldest son, succeeded Maharaja Ranbir Singh on his death in 1885 A.D. Immediately a Resident was appointed by the British and the Residency established in Srinagar. The British, having already annexed the Punjab, were anxious about the frontiers of India. In 1889 A.D., the British conspiring with the Maharaja's brother, Amar Singh, deprived the Maharaja of his powers and appointed a Council of Regency, under the Resident, to administer the State. The Gilgit Agency advanced the British Imperial interests in Gilgit, and Hunza and Nagar were conquered, all in the name of the Maharaja. In 1905, the British relented at last and restored the powers of the Maharaja.

Several progressive reforms were, however, carried out with the active help of the Resident, who controlled the Administration. An Executive Council of five members was established in 1924 by the Maharaja who was the President. Reforms were undertaken in the judiciary and the revenue system. Many works of public utility were undertaken. Colleges and hospitals were opened in Srinagar and Jammu. New roads were opened, among which the roads linking Jammu and Rawalpindi, respectively, to Srinagar, were great feats of engineering skill. Jammu and Srinagar were connected by telephone. The railway line was extended from Sialkot to Jammu. The house-boats,

which were to become so many focal points of tourist interest, were first made in the Maharaja's time as the improved version of the indigenous *Doonga* boat. The salutary results of these measures were that the Kashmiris shed their seclusion and more European and Indian tourists started visiting the Valley. Tourism becoming more popular benefited boatmen, traders, artisans and craftsmen. Sericulture was organised for the first time on a commercial basis.

Raja Hari Singh—the nephew of Pratap Singh and the son of his younger brother, Amar Singh—became the ruler on Maharaja Pratap Singh's death in 1925, as the Maharaja had no son. Hari Singh had already been the Commander-in-Chief of the State forces since 1915. During the First World War, he looked after the training and equipment of the State forces which were sent to the western front.

"His religion was justice", announced the new Maharaja at his coronation in Jammu in March 1926, celebrated with pomp and eclat. He attended the Id prayers of the Muslims at Srinagar. These popular gestures turned to be short-lived as the Maharaja came under the influence of court favourites, losing contact with the people. The State borders were sealed to prevent infiltration of political ideas from the rest of India.

The Muslim press, centred in Lahore, let loose a spate of propaganda against the Maharaja, who, it was alleged, was keeping the Muslim majority in serfdom. The Anglo-Indian press egged on by the British policy of 'Divide and Rule' was not far behind in denouncing the Maharaja. On 13th July, 1931, the Muslim population of Srinagar rose as one man in a mammoth demonstration against the excesses of the State forces. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who had resigned his job in protest, led the movement for the right of democratic self-rule. How the Dogras, who manned the administrative services, refused to see the writing on the wall and the movement for freedom progressed, under the aegis of the national struggle in India, is well-known. In 1932, the Maharaja, however, announced freedom of the press and platform, as recommended by the

Glancy Commission.

The British who had already invested themselves with the civil and military administration of Gilgit (under the Political Agency), secured the area on March 29, 1935 on a 60-year "lease". The British, with as ever, no more pressurized the Maharaja after he had toed the line *vis-a-vis* their frontier policy in Gilgit and adjoining territories. He was given a free hand to deal with the political agitators vexing him, the British for once refraining from interfering in the internal affairs of the State.

Though the movement for Responsible Government was led under the auspices of the Muslim Conference, presided over by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, it did not assume a communal character, which would have been inconsistent with the cultural traditions of the Valley. On 8th May, 1936, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah appealed to the Hindus and Sikhs to participate in the meetings demanding 'responsible government' for the people. As was to be expected, the nomenclature of the Muslim Conference was changed to 'National Conference' in June 1938. The struggle for democratic rights thus became broad-based, embracing the different communities and classes of Kashmiris. In October 1938, the National Conference made a 'national demand' for a legislature freely elected through adult franchise.

While the Maharaja's government made a feeble response by throwing some seats of the legislature open to election, the old MuslimConference received a new lease of life from the redoubtable the leader, M.A. Jinnah, and his Muslim Conference. The "Quit India" campaign, launched in India by the Indian National Congress in 1942 against the British, evoked a similar struggle in Kashmir (in May 1946) against the Dogra hegemony. The demand for transfer of power was suppressed with an iron hand during the prime ministership of R.C. Kak. Jawaharlal Nehru, then President of the Indian National Congress, rushed to Kashmir, where he was arrested (for a day) by the authorities. Characteristically, Jinnah decried the movement as "agita-

tion carried on by a few malcontents...."

Another landmark was the visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Kashmir in July 1947. By that time the British had announced the transfer of power to Indians. Gandhiji was impressed with the communal amity he found in Kashmir. While the events in India were moving fast to the climax of independence in India, the Maharaja removed R.C. Kak from office. The people looked up to the National Conference to give them a lead in the matter of accession of the State to India or Pakistan, on which the Maharaja was dragging his feet.

CHAPTER VII

INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

THE SECULAR ideals of the National Conference had been nurtured under the umbrella of the All-India States' Peoples Conference which was the extension of the Indian National Congress to the Princely States. The British Government announced the scheme of the partition of India on June 3, 1947. During the period between June 17, 1947, when the Government of India Act was passed, and August 15, 1947, when India became independent, the ruler of a Princely State could enter into a standstill agreement with either or both of the independent dominions, India and Pakistan. The Maharaja of Kashmir, flirting with the idea of independence, entered into a standstill agreement with Pakistan, who honoured it more in the breach than in the observance. Finding the Maharaja hesitant in obliging, Pakistan engineered a massive raid of Kashmir by her tribal people on October 22, 1947.

The story of that invasion, and how the raiders' triumphant march towards Srinagar was stemmed by the timely intervention of the Indian Army, is well known. The National Conference, the premier political organisation of the State, under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, opposed joining the Muslim dominion of Pakistan, and urged the Congress leaders to accept the accession of the State to India, subject to the consequent ratification of the Act by plebiscite. The identity of secular and other ideals of the Congress—and its offshoot, the All India States' Peoples Conference—was also the political kinship that Nehru and Abdullah had developed over the years, prompted them to take the fateful step, that linked the destiny of the Jammu and Kashmir State with the rest of India. The instrument of accession of the State to India was signed by Lord Mountbatten, the

Governor General, on behalf of the Indian Government, by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for the people of the State, and by Mehr Chand Mahajan, the Prime Minister of Kashmir, who represented Maharaja Hari Singh. As for the Maharaja, he left Srinagar on the advice of Lord Mountbatten during the tribal raid, never to return to the Capital.

Fighting continued in Kashmir. Dead set against the invaders, the people of Kashmir had already organised themselves into a National Militia under G.M. Sadiq. With the help of the Indian Army and imbued with secular ideas, they fought in defence of their land with courage and determination. On January 1, 1948, India submitted a formal complaint to the Security Council under Chapter VI of the UN Charter "as India was anxious to avoid a direct conflict with Pakistan". Ultimately, the ceasefire followed on Ist of January, 1949, disconcerting the Kashmiris who wanted finally to clear their land of the tribal marauders, but they honoured the trust that India had reposed in the UNO.

As was to be expected, Pakistan refused to honour international agreements to vacate its aggression. The people of the State set up the Constituent Assembly in 1951, elected on the basis of universal adult franchise, and presided over by G.M. Sadiq. On February 6, 1954, the Assembly ratified the accession of the State to India. The new Constitution came into force on January 28, 1957. When the Assembly had passed the Bill of Accession, Sheikh Abdullah declared: "Naturally, if we accede to India there is no danger of a revival of feudalism and autocracy. Moreover, during the last four years, the Government of India have never tried to interfere in our internal autonomy. This experience has further strengthened our confidence in them as a democratic State."

Since then Pakistan has been in illegal occupation of a large chunk of the State territory (so-called 'Azad Kashmir' but directly administered by the Pakistan Government). Pakistan has used all sorts of tactics—incitement to communal disturbance in Kashmir and the rest of India, infiltration of armed

personnel into Kashmir and even wars of 1965 and 1971—to undo the accession of the Jammu and Kashmir State to the Indian Union. That Kashmiris, fired by the zeal of patriotism and secularism, presented a united front to the aggressor from across the border on each occasion, is well known.

In the successive administrations of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Bakshi Gulam Mohammad, G.M. Sadiq and Mir Qasim, followed by the renewed Chief Ministership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, from February 24, 1975, the State has made rapid economic progress on political, economic and cultural fronts along with the rest of the Indian Union.

Assessing from the progress achieved so far in different fields of development since Independence, the State has undoubtedly stepped into a new era, advancing towards establishing a democratic and socialistic order within the broad framework of Indian polity. Delimitation of constituencies (30 in Jammu Province and 45 in Kashmir Province, including Kargil and Ladakh) paved the way for free and fair elections, held in 1957, 1962 and 1972. A dynamic process of closer integration with the Indian Union, brought about by a series of legislations, including the extension of the jurisdiction of the Central Election Commission, and the Supreme Court to the State—and the State coming within the ambit of Central Planning in the 1950's, unfolded new vistas of economic and social progress of the people. The programme of revolutionary agrarian reforms, envisaged in the 'New Kashmir' plan, was implemented step by step. Land reforms were implemented, canals dug extensively, and a net-work of roads built all over the State. The produce per hectare rose to about Rs 502 compared to the all-India average of Rs 470. Education was made free from the primary to the post-graduate classes. Expenditure on the health of each State resident increased from 47 paisa in 1947 to Rs 14.29 in 1971. Power generation increased tenfold—from 4 megawatts in 1947 to 40 megawatts in 1971. The State's income more than doubled in the same period, from about Rs 55.54 crores in 1950-51 to Rs 123.70 crores in 1970-71.

These are but a few indices of the all-round progress that the State has made since Independence, which, as many international observers have pointed out, is in sharp contrast to the part of the State still *illegally* occupied by Pakistan, and thus justifying the conviction and optimism with which the people are working to build the Jammu and Kashmir State of their dreams, as a proud constituent of a progressive, dynamic and prosperous Indian Republic.

CHAPTER VIII

CULTURAL HERITAGE

REMARKABLE FOR the solidity, elegance and durability of its monuments and possessing an unbroken historical record from the hoary past to the present day, Kashmir has the added attribute of having been a seat of learning from ancient times. "For upwards of two thousand years, Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small Valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy," observed Sir George Grierson.[1] Mentioning that Kashmiris have reason to be "justly proud of the literary glories of their land", Sir George added that Kashmir was "for centuries the home of the greatest Sanskrit scholars and at least one great Indian religion, Saivism..."

VOGUE OF SANSKRIT

The idyllic surroundings of the Valley provided a congenial soil for the growth of Sanskrit. "Some of the greatest Sanskrit poets were born and wrote in the Valley, and from it has issued, in the Sanskrit language, a world-famous collection of folk-lore."[2] Sanskrit became the language of religion, culture and knowledge in Kashmir soon after the immigration of Indo-Aryans. In Ashoka's time, when Buddhism was established in the Valley, the texts and commentaries on the new religion were written in Sanskrit (in the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts[3]), contrasting with the ones written in the rest of India in Pali. The Chinese scholar-travellers, Hieun Tsang and Ou-kong,

[1]*Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. II, Part 2.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]The Sharada was a script developed by Kashmiri scholars. Based on the Devanagari script, the Sharada was adopted by the Tibetans in the 9th century A.D. for their language, as they had none of their own.

visited Kashmir to study Sanskrit texts.

The 6th-century king of Kashmir, Matrigupta,[1] was himself a poet and patron of learning. Among the best literary critics of ancient India, Bhamaha, who lived in the beginning of the 8th century A.D., wrote *Kavyalamkara*, the earliest work of poetics (*Alamkara*) which has come down to us. Udbhatta, the court poet of Jayapida, defined 41 types of speech in his *Alamkarasamgraha*. Udbhatta's contemporary was Vamana, another writer on poetics, who also adorned the court of Jayapida. The fame of Anandavardhana, who lived during the rule of Avantivarman, rests principally on his treatise on the science of poetics.

Kashmir became the land *par excellence* of the Saiva faith —based on the principles of idealistic monism (*advaita*)—which was founded by Vasugupta towards the end of the 9th century A.D. His teachings are now lost, but Somananda, Abhinavagupta, Utpala and others wrote works and learned commentaries on Saivism, explaining its doctrine and dogma, and on the *Gita*. Among these, Abhinavagupta was a prolific writer and a versatile genius—poet, critic, philosopher and saint, who wrote more than 40 books, some of which exist. His literary career, which won him a unique place of honour in Indian aesthetics, extended over a quarter of century, up to 1041 A.D.

The course of studies of Kshemendra, a pupil of Abhinavagupta, embraced all the arts and sciences then known in India. A many-sided scholar like Abhinavagupta, Kshemendra wrote poems, narratives, didactic and satiric sketches and treatises on rhetoric and prosody. He made a notable contribution to fable literature with his *Brihatkathamanjari*, in which he preserved for posterity the lost classical work of Gunaditya, credited to be the earliest story narrator of the world. In *Samayamatyrka*, one of his most original poems, albeit, a landmark in social satire, he describes the arts and wiles of

[1]Some scholars have tried to identify Matrigupta with Kalidasa—the reasons adduced are, however, not fully convincing.

the harlot. The *Kathasaritasagara* (the ocean receiving rivers of stories from different sources) by his contemporary, Somadeva, is a collection of stories, based on the Kashmiri version of Gunaditya's *Brihatkathamanjari* and an important landmark of world folklore, in so far as it contains most of the stories of *Panchatantra*.

Mankha wrote his famous poem *Srikanthacharita*—narrating a Puranic legend of Siva—between the years 1135 and 1145 A.D. A dictionary called *Mankakosha* is current in Kashmir. Other celebrated writers in Sanskrit are Bilhana, Shambhu, Jalhana and Kalhana. Of these, Jalhana, and Kalhana were the prized luminaries at the court of the second Lohara dynasty. Kalhana is famous for the *Rajatarangini*, the celebrated chronicle of the kings of Kashmir, which he composed between the years 1149-50 A.D. "A literary production of high merit," the chronicle is—according to Dr Sunil Chandra Ray[1]—"an admirable collection of historical facts presented in an illuminating garb of poetry and soars in the region of fine art." A contemporary of Kalhana, Ruyyaka, authored *Alamkara-sarvasva*, a standard work on figures of speech.

VARIED CONTRIBUTIONS

Kashmir stood out as a great centre of Buddhism about two thousand years or more ago. From the 4th century A.D. onwards, the Valley was an important province of the Mauryan Empire. In Ashoka's time, the province secured special attention; according to the *Rajatarangini*, he had 500 monasteries built in the Valley. Kashmir became the metropolis of Mahayana Buddhism in the reign of Kanishka and after. The commentaries of a historical assembly of Buddhist divines and theologians were deposited by Kanishka in a monastery near Srinagar. In the words of Dr Radha Kumud Mookerjee, "these valuable records may still exist buried near Srinagar and may be unearthed by some archaeological excavations in the future."

[1]*Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, 1969.

Scholars and pilgrims came from distant lands to study Buddhist texts at the feet of learned Pandits of Kashmir. Chinese sources mention Kashmiri scholar-monks—among them, the famous scholar and philosopher, Kumarajiva—who travelled all the way to China and south-east Asia, to spread the message of Buddhism. Princes of Kashmir like Guna Varma (452 A.D.) became Buddhist monks to propagate the new gospel in distant lands.

Thus, Kashmir's contribution to Indian thought and literature —via Sanskrit—was immense. "The people of Kashmir," wrote Hiuen Tsang, (he was in Kashmir about 631 A.D.), "love learning and are well cultured. For centuries, learning has been held in great respect in Kashmir." Bilhana observed in the 11th century: "In every household, even women speak Sanskrit and Prakrit as gracefully as their mother tongue." Between 6th and 12th centuries, scholars from all parts of India flocked to the land "of the Goddess of Learning". It was at Sharadapeeth —the name is still current—in Kashmir that Sri Shankara started his meteoric career of preaching, after he paid obeisance to the goddess, Sharada, enshrined in the temple.[1]

The contribution of Kashmir to literary and dramatic criticism, and to dance and music literature, by a succession of authorities from King Jayapida's time to that of Samgramadeva (1235-52 A.D.), the immortal story books by Kshemendra and Somadeva, the important chronicle by Kalhana and other historical writings that preceded and followed him—notably Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajyabhatta and Suka—are recognized all over India. Similarly, in medicine, Kashmir contributed a lot with the writings of Pribhabhatta and Udbhatta. The exclusive recensions of important classics like the *Mahabharata* and Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* by Kashmiri commentators are yet another feature of Sanskrit learning in Kashmir. Other Sanskrit works were

[1]The custom persists among South Indian Brahmins of prostrating in the direction of Sharadapeeth, in Kashmir, before studies are formally commenced.

also critically commented on : for instance, the *Yudhisthiravijya*, the premier 'Kavya' of Vasudev Bhattatiri (of Kerala), was the subject of commentary by Ranakantha of Kashmir. Then, there was also a two-way concourse between Kashmir ("the land of Sharada"—the Goddess of Learning) and the rest of India. The ancestors of a number of celebrated writers and philosophers of Kashmir came from India—from Gauda (Bengal), Kanyakubja, etc. This went on until the last days of the Hindu rule, when minor works continued to be written.

Sufis and Rishis

The advent of Muslim rule in Kashmir was marked by peaceful dissemination, though fanatic iconoclasts had the field occasionally in later times. The missionaries of the new faith mostly belonged to one or the other order of Sufis from Persia and Bukhara. The confluence of Mahayana Buddhism and Islam in some parts of Persia and Central Asia had resulted in the evolution of the school of Islamic mystics, the Sufis, who founded several orders, some like the one founded by Jalal-ud-Din Rumi branching out into a kind of pantheism, after a mutually beneficial concourse with Hindu and Buddhist philosophies.

In Kashmir, the Islamic teachers found a fertile soil for planting the seed of the creed from Arabia. Buddhism had already broken the rigours of the caste system, and it was an easy task for the Sufi divines (from Persia and Central Asia) to convert the masses to Islam. The meeting together of two great traditions—of Saivism, the Hindu monistic philosophy of Kashmir, and of Erfan, 'Wisdom of the Quran'—gradually took place, giving rise to a unique order of Islamic 'Rishis'[1] whose philosophic beliefs led to the ideal of religious tolerance and a shared faith in God, always cherished by Kashmiris. The

[1]"The most respectable people of Kashmir are the Rishis who, although they do not suffer themselves to be fettered by traditions, are doubtless true worshippers of God. They revile not any other sect and ask nothing of anyone...They abstain from flesh...There are thousands of these Rishis in Kashmir."—Abu'l Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

comforting wisdom, mostly versified by these Rishis, in Kashmiri, the language of the masses, provided solace to the people in the none-too-few periods of economic and political chaos.

Persian Scholars

The Persian language came to Kashmir with the advent of Islam though Persian words had already started percolating into Sanskrit vocabulary. The general adoption of Persian, however, followed after a century, in the reigns of Sultans Sikandar and Zain-ul-Abidin. Sanskrit had continued until then, in the Sharada script; a few tombs of the period bearing inscriptions in Sanskrit testify to its continued use. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin made Persian the court language; himself a poet, he wrote the *Shikayat* in Persian, and surrounded himself with a galaxy of poets. The transition was not irksome as Sanskrit had already ceased to be the language of the common man who had taken to the vernacular, Kashmiri, evolved through several centuries.

The Kashmiri scholar took to Persian—the classical language complementing his mild temperament and refined taste—as the fish takes to water. Learning the court language was also essential for the Brahmins to maintain their position as government officials. Thus it came to pass that Hindus—who had made Kashmir the "high school" of Sanskrit learning—vied with Muslims in making a lasting contribution to Persian literature. Mulla Ahmad completed a Persian translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, under the benign patronage of Zain-ul-Abidin who valued the products of both the languages. A later Sultan, Haidar Ali, composed songs in Persian. Among the Chak Sultans, Yusuf Shah was the most learned. The Mughal rule provided a further fillip to the Persian language. Mazhari, Fani, Mulla Tahir, Ghani, Salim, Auji, Fitrati, Furughi, Majmi, Nafi, Taufiq, Guya, Juya, Sarfi and Yakta are the poets

enumerated by Dr G.M.D. Sufi.[1]

The Kashmiri poet, affected equally by the beauty of style and thought of Persian literature and splendour of the natural phenomena of the Valley, readily took to Persian ways of expressing his emotions. Persian poetry in Kashmir has been divided into three periods: (a) pre-Mughal, (b) Mughal and post-Mughal, and (c) Afghan. Starting with direct imitation of Iranian scholars, it evolved gradually into using local idiom and metaphors, attaining such literary heights that Kashmir came to be called *Iran-i-Saghir* ('Little Iran'). The Kashmiri Pandit, who had earned the title of *Pandit* in the early history of India for his high proficiency in Sanskrit, also distinguished himself in Persian. Dr Sufi gives the names of Pandits Narayan Kaul, Chandra Bhan, Lachchman Ram, Narayan Das, Bhawanidas Kachru, Raj Kaul Arzbegi, Shankar Jeo Akhun, Tabak Ram Turki and others as "great intellectual worthies of their motherland." Among these, Pandit Raj Kaul Arzbegi flourished in the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. In Maharaja Pratap Singh's time, Dewan Kirpa Ram wrote the *Gulab-nama* (a history of Gulab Singh) in Persian, which has been acclaimed as a fine piece of Persian literature.

ORIGIN OF KASHMIRI

The population of Jammu and Kashmir—a multilingual State—can be divided into three distinctive linguistic groups. Inhabiting the Kashmir Valley and some adjoining areas, the Kashmiris (numbering about 2,300,000) speak Kashmiri. The second group, living in the Jammu region (pop. 1,600,000) speak Dogri. The mother tongue of the third group, Ladakhis (200,000), inhabiting the frontier district of Ladakh, is Ladakhi, a language close to the Tibetan. By and large, Kashmiri is the most important language of the State—duly recognised as one of the regional languages of the Indian Union. Besides the languages mentioned, Urdu, Balti, Dardi and Pahari are listed among the principal languages of the State.

Spoken by the aboriginals of the Valley, Kashmiri was ori-

[1] *Kashmir, a History of Kashmir.*

ginally a branch of the Prakrit language—or one of the Prakrits of Sanskrit. With the admixture of words and phrases from the many dialects spoken on the borders of the Valley, Prakrit assumed the form of a new vernacular, Kashmiri. Several European scholars and Kashmiri philologists have adduced the theory that Kashmiri is an off-shoot of the Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit language. That the Dardic language, intermediate to the Iranian and Indo-Aryan, or the Aryan branch of the Indo-European languages, is closely connected with Kashmiri, was established by the researches of Sir George Grierson.[1] Kashmiri is the only language of the Dardic-Aryan group that has a rich literature. That Marco Polo referred to Kashmiri by name shows that it is a fairly old spoken language. It was, however, never recognised as a medium of culture and administration. The languages of the elite and/or administration—down the ages—in the State have been Sanskrit, Pali, Persian, English and Urdu.

Kashmiri literature goes as far back as some six centuries, when the indigenous script, Sharda, was developed. There is evidence that manuscripts in the Sharda script were written on the bark of birch trees. The *Nilamatpurana*, which is a significant source of the history of Kashmir, bears testimony to this fact. Lal Ded—the poetess sage of the 14th century, also known as Yogeshwari Lalla—is credited with giving Kashmiri her native tongue, which led to its becoming a written language. The indigenous script, Sharda, already evolved, was akin to the Bodh script of Ladakh, and the Takri of Kishtwar, though closer to the latter script.

[1] According to Prof. S.K. Toshakhani, Chief Editor of the Dictionary Committee of the J. & K. Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Kashmiri has a Vedic and even pre-Vedic base. He avers, with etymological proofs, that Kashmiri is even closer to East European languages, like Lithuanian, than the Dardic-Aryan languages. He concedes that Kashmiri may have had some exchange of vocabulary with the Dardic group but Kashmiri does not share the *matra* or its basic vocabulary with these languages.

The poetic form of *vaakh* (Sanskrit, *vakhya*), a four-line stanza, was current by the middle of the 14th century A.D. Lal Ded improved the *vaakh* to the standard of a composite metric form that came to stay. Her mystic *vaakh* quatrains attained instant popularity and were mostly communicated by word of mouth. The lasting contribution of Lal Ded's *vaakh* is that these helped to make Kashmiri an adequate vehicle for the expression of philosophical thought. In fact her verses are placed by critics as "the earliest specimen of modern Kashmiri", despite her use of Sanskrit vocabulary and archaic expressions.

The earliest extant work in Kashmiri—in Sharda script—is *Mahayanaprakash* by Rajancha Siti Kantha. It is a treatise on the Trika (Saiva) philosophy, written towards the end of the 15th century A.D. Other works in this, what may be called, Old Kashmiri, are Bhattavatara's *Banasuravadha*, Ganaka Prashtasa's *Sukhadukhcharitam*, and probably excerpts from this Kashmiri in several *Trika Darshana* texts. Typographically, Sharda—with 29 consonants and 13 vowels, comprising long, short and very short sounds—stood somewhere between Brahmi and Devanagri. Whatever the original form of Prakrit—through which Kashmiri derived its affinity with Sanskrit—it is difficult to say, but the basic, strong link with Sanskrit stayed, though with the advent of Muslim rule in Kashmir in the 14th century A.D., came strong linguistic influences in the form of Persian and Arabic vocabularies.

Despite the cultural invasion of the Valley following Muslim rule, Kashmiri survived as a distinct language due to some favourable historical and other factors. The Persian language had a rich philosophical grounding like Sanskrit—there was broad identity in the approach to the soul and God, specially manifested in the Sufi and Saivist creeds—and its exponents were not otherwise exclusive so long as Persian was adopted as the court language. The idyllic symphony of Kashmir's incomparable landscape had a softening effect on the foreign elements who were assimilated in the rich cultural milieu of

Kashmir. All the same, as Kashmiri thinkers and writers were attracted more and more towards Persian literature and took to writing in Persian, Kashmiri became practically a spoken language, and the Sharda script went into gradual disuse.

Kashmiri is a very musical language, because of the large number of vowels and the absence of harsh consonents. The sweetness of the language—however raw otherwise—has made for the preservation of the poems from early days by a song-loving people committing them to memory and passing them down, from one generation to another.

The growth of the Kashmiri language, though fitful and uneven, will be traced in the following pages, through the contribution to it of the well-known writers and poets from the medieval times to the present day.

Lal Ded

In the annals of Kashmir the 14th century stands out as one that produced a number of saints and seers, as well as an enlightened monarch like Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, who has been rightly described as the Akbar of Kashmir. Sidh Bayu, the Saiva Yogi, Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Rishi, popularly known as Nund Rishi, (called Sahajanand by Hindus, and revered by both Hindus and Muslims as the patron saint of Kashmir), Lalla the poetess-sage (affectionately called Lal Ded or Lalamoj—mother Lalla—by all Kashmiris) and Shah Hamadan, were the saints who left a lasting impress on the religious and cultural milieu of Kashmir.

Lalleshwari—that was Lal Ded's real name—was born in a Brahmin family in village Pandrethan, near Srinagar, in the 'sixties (or 'seventies) of the 14th century A.D. She is the first saint-poetess of Kashmir whose thoughts have come down to our time. In socio-economic terms, hers was a period of political uncertainty and economic distress, and her domestic life—married off at the age of 12 to a country bumpkin who cared little for her spiritual sensibilities, and subjected to the whims and caprice of a formidable mother-in-law—added in no small measure to the dreariness around her, turning her extremely

sensitive mind from the 'phenomenal' to the 'real'. Oblivious to her surroundings, she tore up her garments, and roamed up and down the Valley in a semi-naked state. She came into contact with the Muslim saint, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani—popularly known as Shah Hamadan—who had sought refuge in Kashmir from persecution in Hamadan (Persia). Legend has it that to cover her body before the great mystic, she plunged into a baker's red-hot oven and emerged thence dressed in silken robes to have a discourse with him.

Lal Ded was probably influenced by the Sufi philosophy through Shah Hamadan. In any case, she sought and found the basic Truth permeating the outwardly incongruous cults and faiths—Brahmanic pantheism and Islamic monism, Saivism and Sufism—and gave it the best exposition in her poems which came down as her *vakhyas*[1], by word of mouth until the early years of the present century, when these were recorded. The *vakhyas* were not songs as Grierson called them. They were not meant to be sung like *Gurubani*, the hymns of Guru Nanak, as Prof J.L. Kaul has pointed out but were, in his words, "weighted with thought, subtle and deep, and do not have any musical quality as such."[2] In the words of Prem Nath Bazaz,[3] "Lal Ded, like the Buddha, preached her doctrines in the idiom of the masses, and not in high-flown Sanskrit, the vehicle of expression used by all the scholars and the educated classes of her time. Her message is meant for one and all...She desired to shake people out of their mental torpor...Her objectives were philoso-

[1]These *vakhyas* were collected and translated by Sir Aurel Stein and Sir George Grierson towards the end of the 19th century. Dr Dional D. Barnett and Richard Temple rendered them into English verse. In the present century, Pandit Anand Kaul, Prof. J.L. Kaul and Mr Sarwanand Charagi—all of them Kashmiri writers—brought out further editions containing Lal Ded's sayings, thus continuing the preservation of this unique literature for posterity.

[2]*Lal Ded:* Prof J.L. Kaul; Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1973.

[3]*Daughters of the Vitasta:* Prem Nath Bazaz, Pamposh Publications, New Delhi, 1949.

phical revolution and cultural renaissance on a countrywide scale." Eulogising Lal Ded in this vein, Pandit Bazaz calls her "the harbinger of a new age".

The utterances of Lal Ded, couched in the popular idiom of her time, reveal her struggle towards self-realisation, how she transcended desires and temptations:

> O embodied One, dote not upon your body thus,
> Embellishing it, adorning it,
> Providing luxuries for it;
> Even its ashes will not endure.
>
> (Tr. J.L. Kaul)

In her quest for the Absolute, Lal Ded spurned idols:

> Idol is of stone, temple is of stone,
> Above (temple) and below (idol) are one,
> Which of them shall thou worship, O foolish Pandit?
> Cause thou the union of mind with soul.

Lal Ded preached eternal truths that are common to all faiths, in a language that struck the deepest chords in the minds of the people, Hindus and Muslims alike:

> Passionate with longing in mine eyes,
> Searching wide, and seeking nights and days,
> Lo! I behold the Truthful One, the Wise,
> Here in mine own House to fill my gaze.
> That was the day of My lucky stars,
> Breathless, I held him my Guide to be.
>
> (Tr. Temple)

The *vakhyas* of Lal Ded brought about a veritable, intellectual revolution in Kashmir. Recent research, specially that of Prof. J.L. Kaul, has sifted the uncritical or overzealous additions which were made to the *vakhyas* of Lal Ded from time to

time. Out of the authentic *vakhyas*, thus retrieved, what is remarkable is the manner in which she established the secular tradition of harmony and tolerance—the priceless heritage of Kashmiris—and, however indirectly, it contributed to the glorious era of mutual good relations among Hindus and Muslims during and after the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin.

NUND RISHI

A contemporary of Lal Ded, with whom she had mystic rapport, Nur-ud-Din, or Nund Rishi, was the first Muslim saint of Kashmir to assume the title of Rishi. Propagating tolerance and respect for other religions, he is still remembered for his pithy sayings and maxims. His shrine at Chrar, where *Nur-Nama*, the collection of his writings, is preserved, attracts pilgrims, Hindus and Muslims. Known to the Hindus as Sahajanand (his real name before his conversion to Islam when he adopted the name, Nur-ud-Din), Nund Rishi was born in 1377 A.D., in a village near Bijbehara, and belonged to the same family as the Rajas of Kishtwar.

Severing family ties, even as the Buddha did, Nund Rishi lived in a cave, performing severe penances for 12 long years. He is remembered for some of his prophesies, like:

> There, in those halls dazzling with glitter of nobles and lords,
> Where, even the great were refused permission to enter;
> Where I saw houris singing and dancing,
> Or dusting them with brooms made of yak's tail.
> Now, there I have seen cotton being grown,
> O, Nasar, I have seen better, thou to goest and seest for thyself.

When Sheikh Nur-ud-Din Wali (as Muslims called him) died at the age of 63, it is said that Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin *Badshah* (great king) attended the funeral procession and gave expression to the loss that Kashmiris had suffered. The inspiration that



...ctric project.

Lol-ly ... the typical verse form ...

pining for what is not attained in the path of love, ...
Kashmiri word, difficult to translate. A short, melod...

well-known lyrics:

Come, friends, let us to banks and braes,
  to gather yellow-flowered dandelions;
Silently and stealthily,
  without a word of warning, he did
    steal away from me.
  Dear, come, O come to me!

They know it all, they know,
and now talk ill of me,
In rumour and in gossip rude,
When will the tangled web of fate unravelled be?
Dear, come, O come to me!

The even tenor of the royal romance was disturbed by social events—communal disturbances between the Muslim sects of Shias and Sunis of Kashmir. The Mughal Emperor, Akbar, intervened, sending a strong army, which took Yusuf Shah prisoner. The melancholy of Habba Khatun's lyrics took on a poignancy, tinged by a passionate rebelliousness:

In henna, I dyed my hands,
When will he come to me?
O come, and still my craving,
See, how I am dying for thee.
Without thee how shall I fill my days?
How can I endure thy absence, Love?
Say, friend, when will Fate smile on me,
And my Love come to me again? Say when?

The poetess-queen who had spanned the Jhelum at Srinagar with one more bridge—it is still named Habba Kadal after her—was distraught, pining for the release of her consort from captivity. But who would help her against the will of the Emperor? The Mughal Governor of Kashmir issued a warrant for her arrest. The order was withdrawn when he was told that she lived like a *faqir* (mendicant).

After two years of custody at Lahore, Yusuf Shah was awarded a *jagir* in Bengal by Akbar. He died soon after. The news reached Habba Khatun and it stunned her. She then composed what might have been her own epitaph:

I came of peasant parentage
I made a name as Habba Khatun.

I passed through crowds, drawing tight my veil,
But people flocked to see me,
And even the ascetics hurried out of woods,
To catch a glimpse of me.

The *Lol*-lyrics of Habba Khatun, and her successor, Arnimal, survive to this day, sung to the accompaniment of *saz* and *santoor*, *not* and *tumbakhnari*, musical instruments which the Kashmiri musicians have made their own. Even illiterate peasants in the remotest corners of the Valley sing Habba Khatun's lyrics—soulful expressions of the joys and pangs of love and the sorrow of loss and bereavement. To mark her death anniversary, a celebration is held yearly at her tomb.

Arnimal

Appearing on the poetic scene of Kashmir about two hundred years after Habba Khatun, Arnimal carried on the *Lol*-lyric tradition of her predecessor. Born in the 18th century, Arnimal fashioned the *Lol*-lyrics into plaintive wails, poignant and melancholic. Like Lal Ded and Habba Khatun, Arnimal's family life was unhappy—contributing to the poignant pathos and the recurring note of resignation to fate in her poems. Though she was married to Munshi Bhavanidas, a well-known Persian poet, Arnimal was deserted by him and lived mostly in her father's home, where she would be spinning yarn—and lyrics:

Murmur not, my spinning-wheel,
Thy straw-rings I will oil.
From under the sod, O hyacinth,
Raise thy stately form;
For, look, the narcissus is waiting,
With cups of wine for thee.
Once faded, will the jasmine bloom again?

Never letting her frustrations harden into hate, Arnimal

would seek blessings for her philandering beloved, while addressing her plaint to her girl-friend:

> Friend, whom can I tell?
> My rivals laugh at me since he is no longer on speaking terms with me.
> Yet may he live long and give joy to my rivals!
> The thought that he is happy and well sustains me still.

Arni is the wild pale-yellow rose, found in the countryside of the Valley. *Arnimal* literally means "a garland of *Arni*". In a poem she wove her name deftly into one of her romantic poems:

> I was a full-blown summer jasmine,
> but for him I've turned as pale as the *arni*-rose,
> Say, friend, when will my love come unto me? Say when?

The romantic poems of Arnimal constitute a watershed in the development of Kashmiri poetry. After her, there was a creative spurt in Kashmiri, notably in the form of epic poems, biographical and folk literature, including fables. Poems on mysticism and romantic themes were also composed from 1819 to 1880 A.D. Epics like the *Ramayana* by Prakash Ram, romances like *Shirin Khusro* by Mahmud Gami, *Gulrez* by Maqbool Shah Kralawari and tragedies like *Akanandun* by Waliullah and Saif-ud-Din belong to this period. The epic renderings by Parmanand typify the literary achievements of this period.

MAHMUD GAMI

Born (1765 A.D.) during the Pathan regime, Mahmud Gami lived through the Sikh era of Kashmir, and died in 1855 A.D. nine years after the Treaty of Amritsar, which ushered the Dogra rule in Kashmir. He stands out among the poets of his day by the fact that almost all of his output was in the

Kashmiri language.[1] During his long life, he became famous for his narrative, romantic poems *Shirin Khusro*, *Yusuf Zulekhah* and *Laila Majnun*. He also versified in Kashmiri the histories of *Mahmud Ghajni* and *Haroun Rashid*.

The *Ghazal* was Mahmud Gami's forte. His lyrics dealt with *Sufiana* (Sufi) and love themes, the latter predominating. The love lyrics of Mahmud Gami were reminiscent of the passionate longing contained in the verses of Habba Khatun and Arnimal. According to Abdul Ahad Azad,[2] Gami's Sufiana poems did not scale any great poetic heights. He, however, mentions that a series of articles entitled "Mahmud Gami's Yusuf Zulekha" appeared in a German magazine in 1895 A.D. through the good offices of one Colonel Frederick Burkhard who had obtained a copy of the Kashmiri manuscript in Kashmir. Azad also credited Gami, along with Rasul Mir, with having deeply affected the evolution of Kashmiri poetry.

RASUL MIR

The 19th-century poet who shares with Mahmud Gami the honour of being the father of the Kashmiri *ghazal* (the lyric form of poetry) is Rasul Mir. Like Gami and Habba Khatun, Mir also sang of earthly joys and sorrows, the love that enthralled the common folk and motivated their uneventful lives. He also wrote some mystical verse.

Rasul Mir is remembered for an innovation in the style of love songs. In the *Lol* lyrics of Habba Khatun, Mahmud Gami and others, the love plaint is addressed by a woman, usually to a girl-friend. Rasul Mir reversed this trend, in giving expression to the lover's side—he depicts the prejudices of the beloved which explain why the lover looks woebegone. Borrowing

[1] and [2] *Kashmiri Language and Poetry*; Vol. 2; Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, Srinagar; 1962, (an Urdu publication). In 1964, the Academy published a treatise, in Kashmiri, on Mahmud Gami by Ghulam Nabi Khayal.

freely from the Persian and Sanskrit languages—the mellifluous metaphors *et al*—Rasul Mir's poems exploited to the full the musical potential of the Kashmiri language, and produced *ghazals*, remarkable for their sweetness of diction. No wonder then that Rasul Mir became the favourite of musicians, and Rasul Mir day is yearly celebrated in the Valley on October 24.

PARMANAND

The early 19th-century poet, Parmanand, was intensely spiritual and left a lasting legacy. Born about 1790 A.D., in a village near Mattan (the well-known shrine on the way to the Amarnath Cave), Nand Ram—that was his real name—succeeded his father, at the age of 25 as a *Patwari* (revenue collector). The socio-economic realities—the excesses perpetrated on the people during the Sikh rule—were too much for him, compounded as these were by an unhappy family life, because of his shrewish wife. Well-versed in Persian on the one hand and the Vaishnava lore on the other, and knowing some Sanskrit, Parmanand took refuge in philosophising in verses like:

> Ferry me across, somehow, or else shall I sink in the world ocean.
> I am sick of asking Thee again and again,
> Once for all I ask Thee now, and Thou too once for all grant my prayer.

Fed up with his work for the revenue department, he resigned his post as *Patwari* after 15 years of service. The profound sayings of Lal Ded and the study of the *Bhagawad Gita* and the *Upanishads* buoyed him up until the realization came to him that true spirituality lay in rising above the illusion of *Maya* and not merely being other-worldly. He effected the synthesis of Sufism with the Vedanta, which has been "a glorious trait in the cultural development of Kashmir."—(Prof P.N. Pushp). What was needed was the "realization of the Sahaja" — the "Inborn Truth". According to Parmanand, the *Rasa Lila* of life

is incomplete until man dives deep into the ocean of joy and emerges triumphant over the distinction of 'sour' and 'sweet' and soaks his self in the spirit. Convinced of the futility of conventional Yoga which is not suffused with genuine faith and evotion, Parmanand sang of the 'Yoga of Love' in epic episodes *Radha-Svayamvara* and *Sudama Charita*, works which retain their popularity to this day, along with his composition *Shivalagun*.

It was typical of Parmanand and his time that Hindus and Muslims, Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris, admired him to the point of adoration. His followers held him in high esteem until his demise at the ripe old age of 88. His disciples—Lakshman, Prakash Ram and Krishna Das—carried on the vogue he had started, their lyrics also studded with a large number of Persian and Sanskrit words, and a synchronisation of Sufism and the Vedanta philosophies.

Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor

With the emergence of Ghulam Ahmad 'Mahjoor' as a poet of wide and popular appeal in the early twenties of this century, Kashmiri literature entered a period of creative, poetic revival. When Pirzada Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor died on April 9, 1952, Kashmir lost the greatest poet of the century, one whose poetry had inspired generations of men and women for the best part of four decades.

Born on September 3, 1885 in Mitragam village—about 25 miles from Srinagar—Ghulam Ahmad received poetic inspiration from his father, Pir Abdullah Shah, who was a Persian scholar. Determined to write in his own mother tongue, Mahjoor used the simple diction of the folk. Among women poets of Kashmir, he esteemed and emulated Habba Khatun, and in 1926, he modelled a poem (that became instantly popular) after her celebrated song ("Posh-e-mat-i-janano"). His poem "The Flower of Nishat Bagh" became popular throughout the Valley. When recognised by Rabindranath Tagore, the Kashmiri bard's fame spread beyond the Vale of

Kashmir. He emerged from the 'Gul Bulbul' (flower and the bird) phase to take an active interest in social and political affairs. His poetry increasingly epitomised the struggle of Kashmiris for self-government.

The Kashmiri was "deep drunk" with the unhappiness that came with centuries-old poverty and misrule. Much earlier than other bards, Mahjoor sang:

> The Bulbul hankers after flowers,
> The Bambur (bee) after the narcissuses,
> (But) the Kashmiri is deep-drunk...

The dead weight of tradition, in the form of resignation and introverted contemplation, persisted. Mahjoor could not speak out. Still, he said:

> I should have been outspoken but for the fact,
> that the fault-finder is ready,
> to jump at any word (from my lips)
> I fain would closely watch thy path,
> But they, I knew not who, are keeping
> a strict eye over my gaze;
> (Albeit) I am told they are going to
> Invigilate over the opinion 'lurking' in my mind.

Among the poets of the 'New Kashmir' period, Mahjoor ranked as the greatest in the love of his motherland. The poet of the Kashmiris sang:

> Who is the friend and who the foe of your native land?
> Let you among yourselves thoughtfully make out...
> The race and stock of all Kashmiris is one;
> Let us mingle milk and sugar once again,
> Hindus will man the helm and Muslim ply the oars,
> Let us together row (ashore) the boat of this country.

To usher the new era of Kashmir, described as "New Kashmir", the poet sounded the clarion call:

> If thou shouldest awaken the habit of flowers,
> Away with *Zir-o-bam*—the musical instrument,
> Bring about an earthquake, raise a storm, thunder aloud and let loose a flood.

When the tribals from Pakistan invaded the Valley of Kashmir in 1947, Mahjoor sang dolefully:

> The man-eating wild vultures (of the hilly tracts) pounded and killed innocent creatures without number.

Land reform highlighted the reconstruction programme in Kashmir. And Mahjoor gave vent to the joy of the liberated peasant who would, at long last, own the land he tilled:

> The period of tyranny and exploitation is over,
> *Wad-dars* and *Chakdars* (landlords) have lost their land,
> We have just got this happy news.

Mahjoor showed his keen awareness of the pulsating movements of the post-Independence era in poems like *Wolo Hao Baagvano* (Come, O gardener!) and *Gulshan Vatan Chu Sonny* (Our land is a garden).

ABDUL AHAD AZAD

> When I witness ups and downs, banks and demarcations, I lose my temper,
> I seek oneness and equality, for these I run and foam and fret.

These are a few representative lines from the poem *Dariyaav* (River) by Abdul Ahad Azad (1903-1948), who was a junior contemporary of Mahjoor, and was influenced by Mahjoor as

well as by the passionate Kashmiri *ghazals* of Rasul Mir and Mahmud Gami. Promoting himself from the stage of singing praises of the 'tresses and mole' of the beloved, he became a fervent advocate of Revolution, which came to Kashmir in 1947, but he did not live long to see the glory of the 'New Kashmir' that he had visualised; he died prematurely on April 4, 1948.

Azad's poetry—his forte was *ghazal*—did not reach the maturity that Mahjoor's did, but even then it left an impress on Kashmiri literature all its own. Cast in the mould of a rebel—early in his teaching career he was deeply influenced by Marxist thought—Azad decried "a thousand wiseacres pretending to have known God". As he put it: "Azad dedicates himself to man; neither to the mosque, nor to the temple". Evaluating his contribution, Prof. P.N. Pushp observed: "His whole poetry is, in fact, a mighty crusade against fanaticism, communal prejudice and national fads."[1] He quotes Azad for "taking to task the poet of the old school who had opiated the people's minds with his morbid music":

> This land has nurtured in its lap worthy sons like
> Badshah,[2]
> Should its progeny die of hunger on the wayside?
> The water that vitalized Kalhana, Ghani and Shafi,
> Should that very water be poison for me?

Azad's complete works in Kashmiri—collected assiduously by Dr. Padam Nath Ganju—were posthumously published in 1967 by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages. The Academy also published Azad's monumental book "Kashmiri Language and Poetry", written in Urdu in three volumes.

[1]*Kashmir*, Government of India, Information and Broadcasting Ministry fortnightly, August 1, 1951.

[2]*Badshah*—the 'great monarch', as Kashmiris called the 15th-century king of Kashmir, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin.

ASI

A people's poet in the real sense of the word, Abdus Sattar Asi (died 1950) lived to see the realization of his dream of 'New Kashmir' come true. A milkman by profession, Asi studied Hafiz and Sadi in his boyhood and translated into Kashmiri verse two of Iqbal's poems *Shikwa* and *Jawab-i-Shikwa*. Asi blossomed into a poet, after his fruitful contact with Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor. In the late thirties and forties, Asi voiced the growing socio-political consciousness of peasants and workers. In a poem, he ironically praised the 'blessings' of poverty; in others, he exposed the game of exploitation of the 'tyrants' of the people. He addressed himself to his countrymen to rise to the occasion, when the raiders attacked Kashmir in 1947:

> See that thus dost not
> put to shame my blood;
> Beware, the wolf is out
> to pounce on thee.

Patriotism tempered by humanism, as personified by Mahatma Gandhi, appealed to Asi. Grief-stricken at Gandhiji's assassination, Asi sang:[1]

> O, India's life, bereft of thee
>   the country is lifeless;
> O India's pride, bereft of thee
>   the country is desolate . . .
> Alas! he who strove to resuscitate a garden in ruins,
>   has lost his life while laying it out.

ZINDA KAUL

The winner of the Sahitya Akademi award for Kashmiri (in 1956, the first time an award was given for a work in

[1]Translated by Prof P.N. Pushp; *Kashmir*, Publications Divisions fortnightly; September 16, 1952.

Kashmiri), Master Zinda Kaul (1884-1966) ranks with Mahjoor and Nadim among the outstanding Kashmiri poets of the 20th century, who have left an indelible mark on the content and form of Kashmiri literature. Popularly known as 'Masterji', Zinda Kaul was seeped in Vedanta and Saivism, and as such, unlike Mahjoor, uninvolved in socio-economic realities of his day. The mystic in him believed in 'the True, the Good and the Beautiful'—even as Tennyson did—and transcendental eternity.

Seldom has Kashmiri lyric risen to such heights of ethereal imagination as in Zinda Kaul's poem "*Vadihe Manush*" (Man would weep), which he penned after he had suffered personal tragedies, in the deaths of his wife and his eldest son.

Writing some of the finest *ghazals* in Kashmiri, Zinda Kaul could, nevertheless, voice almost robust optimism, envisaging a utopian society for his countrymen, where:

> Robbery is not in league with loot
> The poor are not crushed . . .
> Where people read, sing and play
> Where children weep not . . .
> Remembering God with love and prayer
> In the city of peace and love
> Shall man attain spiritual heights.

Essentially a mystic poet, who saw the divine in everything—Zinda Kaul could describe the changing panorama of nature in its gorgeous setting in the Valley in inimitable quatrains, expressing wonder at the manifestations of the Creator—he held that true worship expresses itself through the love of mankind:

> The heart within man is a priceless ruby,
> And God is the luminosity of love
> In one who has a human heart!

Assessing Zinda Kaul's contribution to Kashmiri literature,

Prof A. N. Raina[1] picks the poem "Helplessness" as "the masterpiece of his depth of feeling and search which makes it a soliloquy, interrogating and wandering for an answer which is not easy to find". Among other numerous admirers, Mahjoor acknowledged the greatness of Zinda Kaul:

> Let my song rise high
> And attain the hue of sky . . .
> And long live Zinda Kaul!

Dina Nath Nadim

Listening in to a talk from Radio Kashmir by Dina Nath Nadim on April 19, 1975 it was interesting to hear him deplore in chaste Kashmiri, and yet in gentle satire, the loss of old, cherished values among Kashmiris. In the 'fifties, he was "the most popular Kashmiri poet of full-blooded youth and vigour", and earlier, in 1947, at the time of the Pakistani raid, one of the leading organizers of the new cultural movement that spearheaded Kashmir's literary renaissance. Also, Nadim was responsible not only for revolutionising the content of Kashmiri poetry, but for making significant experiments in technique and recreating the vogue of writing lullabies and labour-chants.

Born in 1916, Dina Nath Nadim became a teacher in a private high school. He staunchly supported the radical agrarian reform of giving 'land to the tiller'. His was the conviction that the peasant:

> with his plough-share every year
> writes a new Destiny upon the Mother Earth's brow.

Always rising above narrow considerations of caste or creed, religion or parochialism, Nadim reminded the peasant:

[1] *Zinda Kaul*: Dr. A.N. Raina, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi (in 'Makers of Indian Literature' series), 1974.

Thou hast to tame the wild flow of mighty rivers . . .
Thou hast to do away with drought
And inhabit the dreary wastes.

In Nadim's famous poem, *Vanan Von-nam* (The wind spoke to me), distinguished like the rest of his poetry by felicity of expression and freshness of treatment, the Wind, in summing up, says to the poet:

One was the slogan of the garden:
'Kashmir is ours
and Kashmir's bright future is ours'.

Nadim may speak or write nostalgically of the good old days but he is optimistic about the great future of Kashmiri literature. His contribution by way of introducing some new styles in Kashmiri poetry will ensure his place in Kashmiri literature.

MIRZA ARIF

A scientist turned poet, Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg—better known as Mirza Arif—has covered the entire span of Kashmir's economic and political transition from Dogra monarchy to New Kashmir. Defining his mission as a poet, he wrote in the course of a letter to Professor P.N. Pushp: "A poet must be aware of the consequences of whatever he utters and must not only be an interpreter of life, but also its critic. He must dedicate himself to the cause of humanity at large and propagate it . . ." Living up to his professions, he has penned humorous quartets which comprise his matchless contribution to the Kashmiri poetry of today, and which take in all manner of subjects from the exploitation of the poor by the vested interests to the war songs lauding the heroism of the people who withstood the onslaught of the raiders from Pakistan in 1947.

The humanism of Mahatma Gandhi struck a sympathetic

chord in the heart of Arif. When Gandhiji visited Srinagar in early 1947, Arif paid him a warm tribute. And, when Gandhiji fell to the bullets of an assassin he wrote a eulogy with a heavy heart:

> Who has pulled the flower to shreds?
> . . . The sky is rent asunder . . .
> Where has my darling gone, unseen?

The martyrdom of Maqbool Sherwani at Baramulla invigorated the resistance movement under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah, and Arif transmited the martyr's 'message' from the grave:

> 'Sacrifice nurtures the seeds of life,
> Never shall we submit to foreign domination...
> Kashmir will shine as India's crown;
> With it lies the remedy for India's ills...'

Arif's close involvement with social ills continues, though he is proud of what has been achieved for the common man in Kashmir since Independence.

Recent Trends

Kashmiri poetry and other literature of the post-Independence era are a welcome product of the new forces unleashed by the struggle for political freedom, and its aftermath. In the result—as we have observed in the excerpts presented—the modern poet, since Mahjoor, has concerned himself less with the versification of love and romance, and more with social realities and .he facts of life. The National Cultural Front which was set up under the leadership of G.M. Sadiq, after the Pakistan-inspired raid on Kashmir, provided a historic impetus to the resurgence

in the fields of art and literature. Writers,[1] poets, playwrights, painters and musicians appeared on the scene, with their timely contributions which were well received in Kashmir and the rest of India.

The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages was established in October 1958, under the provisions of Article 146 of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution. Mirza Kamal-ud-Din worked as its first secretary; the learned patron then was Sadar-i-Riyasat Dr Karan Singh. The scope of the work of the Academy was widened when Professor Jaya Lal Kaul became its secretary in 1963. The Academy was declared an autonomous body and its activities spread throughout the State.

The Academy has published a number of works by old Kashmiri authors which were either in the archives or in private collections. Among these books is Abdul Ahad Azad's monumental work, *Kashmiri Zaban Aur Shayiri* (Kashmiri Language and Poetry) in three volumes (with able introductions by Professor Ali Jawad Zaidi and Mohammad Yusuf Teng); selected poems in Kashmiri by Dina Nath Nadim, Habba Khatun, Haqqani, Maqbool Kralwari, Parmanand, Rasul Mir, Wahab Parey and Lakshman Kaul. The Academy also published selected poems of mystic poets (Swachkral, Niama Saab, Rahman Dar, Ahmed Batwari, Shah Gafoor, Shah Qalander, Rahim Saab, Wahab Khan and Asad Parey) in two volumes which were edited by Amin Kamil and entitled *Sufi Shaeyir* (Sufi Poets)[2]. A complete anthology of Azad's poems—

[1]The present writer belonged to the group and wrote a number of stories and articles, on the raid. how Kashmiris rose as one man against the invaders. One of the stories was devoloped by Vishnu Prabhakar into a longer Hindi story.

[2]P.N. Bazaz: *Kashmir in Crucible*; Pamposh Publications, New Delhi, 1967 (Chapter entitled "Progress in Cultural Fields".) For uptodate information, the writer is obliged to the Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, who also presented him about 80 works of the Academy in Kashmiri and other languages.

as mentioned earlier—has also been published.

The folk literature, available in Kashmiri, Dogri, Ladakhi and Punjabi has been collected and published by the Academy. It has also published a Kashmiri-Kashmiri dictionary, besides Kashmiri-Urdu, Dogri-Hindi and Dogri-Dogri dictionaries. Its multi-lingual journal, *Sheeraza*, is issued in Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu, Punjabi and Hindi. Two schools of music and fine arts were started in 1964, at Srinagar and Jammu, to impart scientific training to students in painting, classical music and dramatics.

The Academy published *Kashur Sargum* (Kashmiri music) by Sheikh Abdul Aziz in two volumes, in which he gave—for the first time—scientific notations to *Soofiana Kalam*, the Kashmiri classical music. The former secretary of the Academy, Mohin-ud-Din Akhtar—a keen observer of men and manners—has written perceptive stories on the social life of Kashmiris. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award of 1957 for his collection, *Sat Sangar* (Seven Peaks). His two novels, *Souzal* (Rainbow) and *Dod Dag* (Pain and Anguish) represent Kashmiri prose at its best. The present secretary, Mohammad Yusuf Taing, has ably edited a number of works of the Academy. Another prose work, *Kashur Nasrechi Kitab* (Book of Kashmiri Prose) earned Professor Ghulam Mohiud-Din Hajini (b. 1917) the Jammu & Kashmir Cultural Academy Award in 1961. Other Academy awards have gone to Sufi Ghulam Mohammad—for *Loosmaty Tarak* (Faded Stars), sketches and stories—, to Bansi Nirdosh (*Bal Marayu*—I die Frustrated—a collection of short stories), and to Muzaffar Azim, for *Zolana*, a collection of poems.

Another Sahitya Akademi Award winner,[1] Rahman Rahi (b. 1925), has published *Sana Vani Saz* (Captivating Music) and *Subhuk Soda* (Morning Joy), in 1955 and 1956, respectively. He has also to his credit collections of children's stories in

[1]The 1975 Sahitya Akademi award for Kashmiri was won by Ghulam Nabi Khayal for a collection of essays, entitled *Gaashir Munnar;* the award for Dogri (poems) went to Krishan Smailpuri for his publication "*Mere Dogri Geet*" (My Dogri Songs).

Kashmiri—yet another innovation testifying to the resurgence of the Kashmiri language. Among other contemporary writers in Kashmiri may be mentioned Ghulam Nabi Firaq, Nandalal Ambardar, Mohammad Amin Kamil (editor of the *Sheeraza*, the journal of the Academy), Ghulam Ahmad Mushtaq, Pitamber Nath Dhar, Ghulam Rasool Nazki, Prem Nath Premi, Ali Mohammad Lone, Dina Nath Almast, Moti Lal Saqi, Chaman Lal Chaman, Radhey Nath Masarat, Makhan Lal Mahow, Fazil, Rasa Jawdan, Qaisar Qalandhar, Rasa Jawdani, Aisha Mastoor, and many others.

The functioning of the All India Radio stations in Srinagar and Jammu has greatly helped in bolstering the literary talent in the State. Pushkar Nath Bhan, a radio artiste, is well-known for his humorous skits and other programmes. Likewise, writers are coming to the forefront in Jammu *via* the radio station. The TV station at Srinagar has furthered the incentives to the cultural movement.

The State has thrown up a number of writers in Urdu, Hindi and English, besides Kashmiri and Dogri, too numerous to be mentioned here. By and large, Dogri and Ladakhi and other State languages are coming into their own. For instance, the Academy has published a History of Dogri Literature and Pahari Art in Dogri. The Academy continues its programmes to publish books of a high literary standard and research value in different languages of the State.

CHAPTER IX

FOLKLORE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

INDIA IS THE home of some of the oldest folklore in the world. The folklore of Kashmir has an important place in the "literature of the people" of India which has expressed—and mirrored—the collective urges and experience of the folk from time immemorial. Written in the first century A.D., the *Panchatantra* (the five books) is the oldest extant collection of folk stories. The early Arabs carried these Indian fables to the highest courts of the Muslim world from where they travelled to the West. These along with the later didactic collection of *Kathasaritsagar* by Somadeva of Kashmir have been translated into almost every major language of the world.

Kashmiri, the major language of Kashmir, spoken by more than three million people, is an off-shoot of the Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit language. It was enriched by Persian diction during Muslim rule, and later by Urdu. Its rich literature lives in its songs and ballads.

KASHMIRI FOLK SONGS

Folk songs in Kashmir preserve the myths, customs, traditions and legends of days by gone. These are the living monuments of Kashmiri poetic glory. Rural itinerant ministrels usually carry a *Dahra*, an iron rod with loose iron rings on it, and when they sing folk songs, they shake the rings skilfully up and down so as to produce a pleasing jingle. These minstrels have mostly passed on the folk songs, stories and ballads by word of mouth down the ages. The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, set up in 1958, has rendered yeoman's service in publishing folk songs and ballads in the Kashmiri language, written in Perso-Arabic script. A book (in Urdu) has also been published on Dogri folklore.

Kashmiri folk songs present considerable variety of theme, content and form. They can be broadly classified into opera and dancing songs, pastoral lore, romantic ballads, play-songs, semi-mystic songs, etc. Then there are songs sung during particular seasons or in accompaniment to certain occupations. Also, lullabies, wedding songs, dirges, etc.

The predominant theme of folk songs is a woman's touching plaint about her strayed lover. A typical love song is:

My love is out to tend his goats,
And, he must be weaving a garland there;
A garland of fresh, dewy, *sosan* flowers,
For me, ye maidens.

In such songs, the jilted woman addresses her girl-friend with the words, "Hai Vaseye" (Alas! my girl-friend), before expressing her grievance.

The serpentine and calmly flowing river of the Happy Valley, the Jhelum, forms the theme of the folk-songs:

O thou slow-motioned Jhelum;
For thee, let me devote my all, O Jhelum!
How great is thy stateliness!
For thee, let me devote my all, O Jhelum;

The peasant women sing praises of the majestic tree of Kashmir, the Chinar, whose beautiful leaf recurs in the lovely motifs of the Valley's manifold art products:

To me, O Chinar leaf, my love has sent thee,
My all, O Cupid, shall I sacrifice for thee,
Thou art, O Chinar leaf, a prince of beauty,
My all, O Cupid, shall I sacrifice for thee.

Saffron of Kashmir is well-known in song and legend. The saffron fields of Pampur, in the vicinity of Srinagar, are famous.

While picking saffron flowers, peasants, men and women, sing:

> Towards Pampur went away my darling,
> Saffron flowers caught him in fragrant embrace.
> O, he is there, and ah me! I am here
> When, where, O God, would I see his face?

A village girl may sing a conceit in sweet tones:

> Proud of thyself art thou,
> O saffron flower.
> Far lovelier than thee am I,
> O saffron flower!

In a wedding-song, the bridegroom's mother leads the chorus:

> You pretty demsels, stay here tonight,
> O, do sing in honour of the Sultan of India.
> His wife's people claim him as their own,
> But I shall decorate his bed with mica.

The beauty of the bride is fittingly sung by the rustic muse:

> Our belle is robed in muslin,
> Oh maid! who has dressed you?
> Your teeth are so many pearls,
> Who has delved them from the sea?
> You are a dealer in gems,
> O, maid! who has dressed you?

In a *Ruph* (dance song), girls with arms interlocked round each other's waists and heaving forward and backward, will sing only a couplet in chorus:

> O, you must tell me
> Where my boy has gone.

Is he a fountain in life's garden,
Or, a well of nectar, sweet and delicious?

Such folk songs are chaste, simple and full of pathos. A love-sick maiden consoles herself in these folk verses:

Awake, awake, O sweet hyacinth,
Come on, let us dance, O sweet hyacinth.

Folk Tales

Kashmir has a great fund of folk tales. They are as old as the hills. Many of them like "Zohra Khatun and Haya Bund" "Gulala Shah", "Bombur and Lolare" and "Himal and Nagraya" are pure Kashmiri in origin. *Wazir Mal* and *Lal Mal* are the two famous collections of fairy tales in pure Kashmiri dialect which the Kashmiri villagers cherish as their treasured possessions. These have been rendered into Kashmiri and Persian verse. Others, whose variants constitute the large majority, are popular tales of the East and the West.

Some points common to the folk tales of Kashmir and the rest of the world may be underlined. The charmed ring of Alladin has many interesting variants in the folk tales of Kashmir. Phoenix, the legendary bird—*Anqa* in Arabic countries—is called *Huma* in Kashmiri tales. *Nag* or snake—also meaning spring—is peculiar to Kashmiri and Bengali tales. The magic carpet of the Arabian Nights that flies at the will of the owner is called *Bhadrapith*—Sanskrit for "splendid seat"—in Kashmiri tales. *Shah Sayar* contains a number of romantic tales and *Shashman* includes stories of thugs and highwaymen. Ashraf of the Punjab folklore is a near echo of Sharaf of Kashmir. The singing mystic fowl, whose eggs—and flesh—are priceless, occurs in Russian, German, Spanish and Kashmiri tales. The goldsmith as a dishonest workman, who leads a dissolute life, appears in Siamese, German, Punjabi and Deccan tales, besides many of Kashmir.

A concluding word about folk ballads: these are popular in

villages, sung by *gaivan vols*—the wandering minstrels. They sing the popular ballads "Yusuf and Zulekhah", "Laila and Majnu", "Hatim Tai", etc., which are of Persian origin, and others connected with the lives of Hindu gods, Krishna and Rama. "Lalla Lakhman" is an example of a ballad where fun borders on the burlesque. Such pieces bring out the wit and wordly wisdom of the Kashmiri folk. Opera songs form part of *Bacha Nagma* (Kashmiri opera) of the rural areas. It is just as well that Radio Kashmir and Srinagar TV feature these programmes, thus helping in preserving the folklore of Kashmir.

No appreciation of a people's folklore is complete without a study of their proverbs. Kashmir has a rich store of proverbs, which are on the lips of the people. These form an epitome of their experiences in different spheres of life—social, political and philosophical. Almost every proverb has an anecdote behind it.

The Muse of Kashmir has sung through her folk songs, fresh and chaste, rhythmic and musical. In the song and dance —and other folklore of Kashmir—are embodied elements of the diverse heritage of Kasmir's rich past. With the renaissance of the literature of Kashmir, it is just as well that folklore is not only being preserved but substantial additions are also being made to it.

DOGRI FOLKLORE

The folklore of 'Dogar Desh' (Jammu, Chamba, Kangra, etc. which used to be one region) consists of Dogri folk-tales, folk-songs, proverbs and riddles. Dogri folk-songs constitute the most characteristic part of its folklore. These preserve the myths, customs, traditions (particularly, the martial traditions) and legends of bygone days.

Most Dogri folksongs consist of songs (mostly quatrains) which can be divided into a number of categories. These are songs of love (themes of separation and longing being predominant), religious lore, wedding songs, ditties that go with dances, songs connected with fairs and festivals, ballads glorifying

Dogra heroes and martyrs, romantic songs tied with the seasons, atc. Then there are folk-songs about sports or depicting funny situations or merely playing up the repartees of local wits.

The Dogras are justly proud of their glorious contribution to India's military history, in having extended the country's frontiers many thousands of miles further north to the very borders of Central Asia and Tibet. Consistent with the Dogra martial tradition, which has a fund of episodes comparable with the heroic deeds of Rajasthan, many songs—and ballads—recount the exploits of heroes, some portraying the conflict between love and duty in a telling manner, and others depicting the ravages of war.

Heroes and Martyrs

The lore connected with heroes like General Zorawar Singh (who has been described by some historians as the greatest general of the nineteenth century) and his associates, Wazir Ratno and Basti Ram, Baj Singh, Ram Singh and many other heroes, like Mian Dedoo, has strong appeal in the Jammu and outlying provinces. These songs called 'baran' or 'karkan' recount the thrilling episodes of dedicated patriots who sacrificed their all to uphold the honour of their family and country. The balled of Dedoo Jamwal who fought against the Sikhs to the bitter end is a stirring tale—the Dogra language, which is replete with hard consonants, lending realism to the din and clamour of battle. The longest 'bar' (ballad) relates to the exploits of the legendary hero, Gugoo, who fought against the Nagas, married a princess from Bengal and waged a lone but successful battle with a Sultan of Ghaznavi over a cow beloging to a widow. Romantic ballads like "Hans Morni" and "Rup Basant" are comparable in their treatment and content to Punjab's celebrated counterparts "Heer Ranjha" and "Sohni Mehwal".

A fair is held every year at the *Samadhi*—the monument—raised to Bawa (saint) Jitoo. Similar fairs are held at the

shrines of other heroes and one hears the songs of their valour and martyrdom.

Folklore is connected with the religious shrines in Jammu and Kangra. Each song is pegged on a particular shrine, telling the story of each deity and its association with the hallowed spot. The exploits of each deity inevitably culminate in the triumph of Good over Evil. These songs are sung with extreme devotion even as Muslims recite the 'Naat' at the shrines connected with the saints.

The better known Tiraths, (shrine)s which are the venues of these pilgrimages are: Vaishno Bhagwati (Jammu), Jwala Bhagwati (Kangra), Kalka (Bahu Fort, Jammu), Harmandir (Samba, Jammu), Parmandal (Samba), Baij Nath (Kangra) and Sidh Mahadev (Chenani, Jammu). The *Dhol* and other drums are beaten with gusto, to the accompaniment of these songs. Earthen pitchers are used to sonic advantage with *Bhajans* and religious songs which continue to have a strong appeal in rural areas.

The folk bard may just weave humour into words for fun and for taking off the tedium of the pilgrim's journey, like:

Let us also to the Ghagwal fair,
But the purse is quite empty.
It doesn't matter,
Chatting, walking, we do the journey,
And reach there,
In the small hours.

Love Songs

Dogri love songs are suffused with emotion, as deep-felt as it is spontaneous. In the love songs, the lover may be called Prithvi Singh and the girl, Inder Devi, the quatrain running:

My love, Prithvi Singh,
Whence have the dark clouds come?
And, Inder Devi, dark clouds overwhelm the heart,
The eyes are raining cool waters.

The lovers' flute in the wood may be beckoning the comely lass to the rendezvous:

> Lover's flute is playing,
> The belle leaves her home,
> On the pretext of fetching water.

The wedding songs are sung in happy chorus by the ladies welcoming the bridegroom. The wish for a partner in life, thus expressed by a girl, in a song is addressed to her father:

> My dear father,
> You are mature and wise,
> Therefore look out for
> A good partner for me.

The following quatrain expresses her longing beautifully:

> My dear father,
> Listen to my request,
> I want a spouse like Rama,
> Help me in this quest.

By the time the daughter reaches marriageable age, the air of romance is disturbed by the fears of the demands of dowry that may be made by the in-law folk:

> The daughter's father is poor,
> The mother is distraught,
> The daughter is marriageable,
> The apprehension is,
> That the groom will demand dowry.
> Oh God! Please have mercy.
> So that our daughter is wed,
> And our honour and prestige are preserved.

There are other sad songs, too, like deploring the hapless state of a father who still has an unwed daughter on his hands:

> The arch of Lahori gate is high,
> None, passing through, need bow his head.
> But a father whose daughter is not so far wed,
> Has to bow his head even there.

Life, generally, is not a bed of roses for the Dogra woman, after marriage. Hers is a life of sufferings, borne patiently:

> I have to sweat in the field, guard it from birds and animals,
> And then, I have to spin at home.
> I have to fetch water from a long distance,
> And, my feet get sore.
> Tell me, O my sister, with whom am I to discuss,
> My tale of suffering and hardship?

More often than not, the Dogra woman's husband would be in the army, a long distance away. She repairs to the *Patwari* to request him to write a letter for her but he does not oblige. And, she would sing her plaint:

> I am sick of separation, my love,
> I am sick of separation,
> I entreat the *Patwari* again and again,
> To write a letter for me, but he refuses.
> So you leave the army and return home.

The Dogri original, emphasising the emotional content of the mood of separation, reads:

> *Tera miga lagada i manda. O gadda,*
> *Tera miga lagda i manda,*
> *Eh Patwari migi khat rehyun likhi dinda,*
> *Sau sau karnian Chanda.*

And then, she complains of the army:

Kehsi banai Rama,
Jange di chakri.

(Why, O God Rama, have you created a permanent institution like the Army?)

In another song, the mood of separation is depicted beautifully:

I prefer death to separation,
I am afraid of people's glances;
They will covet my youth,
Like birds falling upon a fruit-laden tree.

The pithy Dogri original reads:

Jobana dabuta jhuli-jhuli paunda,
Te bahi jaude najran de dar.

There are songs known as *Gujraili*, singing of the fun and divine romance between Lord Krishna and the Gopis.

No appreciation of the people's folklore is complete without a study of their proverbs. Jammu has a rich stock of proverbs which are on the lips of the people. These form an epitome of their experiences in different spheres of life—social, political and philosophical. Almost every proverb has an anecdote behind it.

Coming to the modern times, there are songs, which are down-to-earth, like the one which commends savings certificates:

In twelve years' time,
The amount will be one and half,
They will become fifteen,
With which money Manoo can be educated,
And, besides, a plot of land will be purchased.

The Muse of "Dogra Desh" sings through her folk songs,

ballads and tales of valour and courage. The song and dance —and other folklore—of Jammu and surrounding areas are well preserved. Fifty Dogri folk-tales, including some from the Chamba Valley, have been published so far. In 1959, Dogra Mandal, Delhi, published a selection of nine Dogri folk-tales, edited by Bansi Lal Gupta. The Dogra Association, Jammu, also brought out a collection of folk-tales entitled "Ek Ha Raja", (i.e., "Ek Tha Raja", in Hindi, or "There was a Raja"). A collection of folk songs was translated into English by Dr. Karan Singh (Asia Publishing House, Bombay).

Dogri folk literature has provided entertainment and a sustained means for creative expression to the Dogras for hundreds of years. It offers immense possibilties for research to the philologist, the historian and the linguist. The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages has rendered signal service to the cause of folklore through publishing ten collections of Dogri folk-songs, six compilations of folk-tales, and one volume each of Dogri idioms and proverbs, plus a number of other essays in this field. The Academy also brought out a book in Urdu (translation of "Dogri Folklore and Pahari Art" by Professor Nilambar Dev Sharma).

CHAPTER X

DANCE, DRAMA, MUSIC

THAT DANCE, drama, music and the fine arts date back to hoary antiquity in the State is amply evidenced in the ancient annals. The arts, reaching their apogee during Hindu rule, were encouraged by the Muslim rulers also, in so far as the advent of Islam in Kashmir was not in a fanatic or Puritanic form. The synthesising cult of Sufism favoured dance and music, and thus the classical dance forms prevalent in Kashmir absorbed the influences from the dance techniques of Persia and Central Asia. In the process, Kashmiri music developed affinities with both Indian and Persian prototypes, and evolved *Sufiana Kalam* with 54 *maqams* (modes) which have Indian as well as Persian names.

As in the rest of India, classical dancing in Kashmir had a religious background. There are quite a few references to dancing in the *Rajatarangini;* in the first chapter, Kalhana mentions Jalauka, the son and successor of Ashoka, who was a worshipper of Siva and a lover of music and dance. That dancing was not looked down upon as a profession is apparent from the Chronicle, wherein it is recorded that king Chakravarman (923-933 A.D.) married two professional dancing girls, Mamsi and Nagalata, who were sisters, and belonged to a lower caste. Similarly, Utkarsa (1089 A.D.) married Sahaja, a dancing girl attached to a temple, whom "he had seen on the dancing-stage". Kalhana has recorded how the performing artistes most ably depicted the vast range of human emotions through their art, won admiration from the kings and acclaim from the audiences.

One of the last Hindu kings of Kashmir, Harsha (1089-1101 A.D.), who maintained a magnificent court at least in the early

part of his reign and was a lover of music and the arts, patronised dance and drama. He himself taught dancing girls how to act and dance. Dancers who generally belonged to the so-called lower classes were raised by him to the status of courtiers. From Kalhana, Bilhana and other historians, we know that temple dancers maintained a high standard of their art, as was prevalent in other parts of the country. The treatises on poetics, aesthetics and literary criticism of great masters like Kshemendra, Mammata, Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, establish the fact that dance and music were not isolated phenomena of cultural life but formed the essential ingredients of the dance drama which, narrating the stories of kings and deities, were very popular with the people. Students of Indian classical dance are conversant with the Kashmiri commentaries on Bharata's, *Natya Shastra* and the original works on dance that emanated from the Valley from Udbhatta, Lollabata, Sankuka, Bhatta Nayaka and others. The Tandava of Siva is described in *Harvijayakavya* by Rajanaka Ratnakara. The surviving sculptures and reliefs on the walls and columns of old temples, which have figures of dancers, embellished with ornaments and graceful hair styles, point to the eminent heights attained by dance and drama.

King Kalasa (1063-89 A.D.) introduced ballet dancing and choral music. The vogue of classical dancing continued as far down as the 14th century A.D., i.e., long after Hindu rule had ended. Srivara, the historian, describes graphically a classical dance performed at the court of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470 A.D.). Specifically, he mentions the plays *Zaina Vilas* and *Zaina Charitha*, which were written and staged. These were continuations of the earlier plays like *Vikrama Charitha* by Bilhana which was most probably modelled on Bana's *Harsha Charitha*. These dramas were staged by professional artistes in ancient and medieval Kashmir. There are references to theatrical performances, the stage and strolling bands of players in the *Rajatarangini*. Suitably dressed, the players would adorn themselves with emollients and various colours. Rendered with

aplomb and realism, the comic roles depicted the *nouveau riche* Damara or the rapacious Kayastha. On festive occasions, the strolling bands of players received customary gifts from the king and nobles, these bonuses being over and above their earnings from public performances.

King and commoner alike cultivated music as a fine art in ancient Kashmir. Music was played in Buddhist *viharas* in the reign of Jalauka. Music was a must at religious ceremonies, particularly those connected with Tantric worship. Indulged in at bed-time, music of the lute and flute was a luxury of kings and high nobles. King Kalasa—mentioned earlier—popularised light operatic (*Upanga-gita*) songs, and his son, Harsha, would amuse his father in public with songs.

The instruments most in favour were the lute, the flute and the drum. The temple music accompaniments were the conch, a big drum and cymbals. There is also mention of a *Hudukka* (in the *Rajatarangini*) which can be compared to a bagpipe. Folk music also existed in ancient Kashmir as a distinct genre, not in competition with classical music. *Chakkri* (folk chorus), which continues to be popular, and is known to Indian audiences via the T V programmes, is traceable to the time of Kalhana (12th century A.D.) and earlier. King Bhiksecara (1120-21 A.D.) occupied himself in "playing music on earthen pots, brass vessels and other such instruments" during his short reign.

The manuscripts of both *Zaina Vilas* and *Zaina Charitha* are not to be found today. The manuscript of another Kashmiri play, *Banaswara Vadh*, staged during that period, is, however, available. It has been transcribed into modern Kashmiri by Mohammad Amin Kamil. According to Kamil, the work is a fullfledged opera with the tune (*Chhand*, the Kashmiri word for it) for each song provided in the text. A factual history of Kashmiri drama has been possible only from this time.

Some of the Sultans of Kashmir were proficient in classical and folk music. A classical singer himself, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, maintained musicians at the court, including Karnataka

musicians who popularised a number of Karnataka *ragas*. Among the Chak Sultans, Hussain Shah and Yusuf Shah (the consort of queen-poetess, Habba Khatun) were great patrons of dance and music. Kashmiri music drew nearer to both Indian and Persian music, and in course of time developed its own idiom, *Sufiana Kalam*, which lays stress on the diction of the songs and is sung in chorus, even as the Persian or Turkish counterpart is recited. Like the *ragas*, its *maqams* (modes) have their time significance. The most favoured instrument is the 100-stringed *Santoor* (*San* means 'hundred' and *toor*, is strings, in Persian), which is the *Sitar* of Kashmir. The most popular instrument in folk music is the *Rabab*, introduced by Zain-ul-Abidin from Turkistan. The *Sitar* of the Kashmiri musician is the *Saz* (or *Saz-i-Kashmir*) which is a bowed instrument, and is accompanied by a *Dukra*.

The vogue of dance and music in the liberal reign of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin has been mentioned already. During the Mughal rule (starting in 1586 A.D.), the Emperors would witness dance performances in their beautiful gardens. The dancers reciting songs in Persian (which had replaced Sanskrit by then) came to be known as *Hafizas*. Having received an exacting training, the *Hafiza* would sing to the accompaniment of *Sufiana Kalam* with *Santoor*, *Saz*, *Tabla*. etc. Their dress resembled that of the Kathak dancers of northern India. Until the thirties or so of this century, Kashmiris holidaying on the lakes in house-boats would enjoy *Hafiza* dances; the *Hafizas* would be on hand during wedding celebrations, at the homes or when the wedding processions would be taken out on boats on the Jhelum. Along with the *Hafiza* dance, which generally catered to the elite among the Hindus and Muslims, there evolved the popular dance form, known as *Bacha Nagma*, introduced by Afghans from Kabul, in which a teenaged boy, dressed as a girl dancer, is trained in the *Hafiza* style of dancing. *Bacha Nagma* continues to be popular in the villages, particularly at harvest time.

Among the folk dance forms of today, the only one popular is the *Ruf*. Mainly danced by women on festive occasions, and

by boy-dancers in the *Bacha Nagma* opera, *Ruf* is an offshoot of *Chakkri,* which is a form of collective singing by men and women. *Ruf* is thus a descendant of a dance-form of collective folk merry-making in times when singing and dancing were in vogue. Another dance form, *Dambaeli*[1] danced to the accompaniment of *Naghara* (drum) and *Suranai* (a kind of *Shehnai*, the reed pipe), has lost much of the cadence of step and music, and is practised by the so-called backward class of 'Watals' (mostly sweepers) only. Another lesser known dance form is the *Wuegi-Nachun*—danced by Kashmiri Pandit women round the bridal *Rangoli* (patterns made with henna and lime and other colours) after the bride has left for her husband's home.

The traditional *Bhanda Paathar,* which is the folk opera-cum-ballet still popular in the countryside, is of ancient origin, amply demonstrated by the versatility of the repertoire of the *Bhands* (opera dancers). The *Paathars* are mostly highly dramatised anecdotes, some of the lampooning degenerating into vulgar obscenities. The *Paathars,* nevertheless, are basically folk-operas which have lost their musical chores.

In the modern period, the last but one Dogra ruler of the State, Maharaja Pratap Singh, fostered the advent of drama on the stage. A few dramatic clubs were formed and enacted the plays of Agha Hashar and Betab. The first Kashmiri play, *Satch Kahawat* (True Tale) was staged in 1928, dealing with the theme of Harishchandra's self-sacrifice for Truth. The National Cultural Front, formed soon after Independence, staged Kashmiri plays, which were witnessed by thousands of people on the stage and in the open, a sign of the cultural upsurge of the time. Kashmiri plays, *Greesi Sund Ghara* (Villager's Home) by Hajini and *Batahar* (Pandits' Quarrel) by the late Pandit Prem Nath Pardesi were staged under the auspices of the Front. An

[1]Kashmir's well-known writer and playwright, Dina Nath Nadim, in a 1968 paper—which appeared in *The Cultural Digest,* Srinagar, August, 1975—observed: "Interestingly enough, the people in Bangla Desh and borders of NEFA have a dance similar to our *Dambaeli* and they call it *Damail.*"

attempt was made at the instance of the late Commander Dhanwantri to integrate some of the virile dance-forms like *Bhangra* of the Jammu region with those of Kashmiri forms. A ballet kind of *Bhangra* entitled "Land to the Tiller" was composed by Dina Nath Nadim in 1949 ; its staging forms a watershed in the modern ballet of Kashmir coming into its own.

The accent after this landmark was on plays that could depict the men and manners as well as the aspirations of the people. "Bombur Ta Yamberzal", the first opera in the real sense of the word, was composed and staged—its music systematically based on folk tunes. The romatic story of the opera is based on a folk song that the bumble-bee (*Bombur*) and the narcissus (*Yamberzal*), despite their mutual love, never commune in life. The representative Kashmiri folk-tale, *Himal Nagray*, was composed as an opera by Dina Nath Nadim and Roshan, and staged with great success. Later, Nadim composed *Meghdoot*, based on Kalidasa's famous poem; yet another, *Shihil Kul* (Shady Tree) was pegged on the theme of national integration.

Another opera, *Gulrez*, composed by G. R. Santosh, was broadcast from Radio Kashmir. In the typical opera tradition, the characters of most of these operas were the flowers, the song-birds, the trees, the breezes, the rivers and the lakes of the Valley, the background formed by the colourful, variegated landscape, and the exotic, haunting folk tunes complementing the soft step of the *Ruf* dance. These experiments in theatre art, continuing under the patronge of the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Arts, Culture and Languages, assure its progressive growth, while the Radio and TV continue to provide the mass outlets to dance and drama-forms of the State.

PAINTINGS, SCULPTURE

The aesthetic qualities of Kashmiris, evinced in their art and architecture, found expression in painting also, whether in illustrations of manuscripts or various depictions on cotton and other material. Floral designs and calligraphy became the

vogue with the advent of Islam. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin and the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, encouraged painting, and the Kashmiri painter developed a style of his own, called the Kashmiri *Qalam*.[1] The excellence and variety of the Kashmir landscape is the distinguising trait of the *Qalam* paintings.

The Kashmiri artist was at his best in producing book illustrations—on Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts—which have survived. Actually, the art was practised even during the first quarter of this century. In the Hindu period, Saivism provided the theme for many paintings. Quite a few of that age are devoted to godddess *Durga*—of the Hindu pantheon—in the form of the 18-headed *Sharika*. On certain festival days, the Kashmiri Pandit families continue to receive bright-coloured paintings of gods and goddesses, executed deftly by the family priest.

In the later 18th and early 19th centuries, the Kashmiri artists were influenced by the painters of Basholi and Kangra, and created some fine pieces of secular themes. Basohli, a vassal of Jammu kings in mid-18th century and after, developed a unique school, famous for its 'primitive' miniatures, which please the eye more than the accomplished products of the semi-Mughal Kangra style. Basohli painting has been characterised by a competent critic[1] as "among the great achievements of Indian, nay, of human art" and "more alive and more inspiring than most of contemporary art."

The Kashmiri artist was at home in the field of sculpture also, as has been glimpsed in the chapter on Architecture. The surviving specimens, after the Christian era, reveal a range and fecundity, comparable to the best in other parts of the country. The mouldings on Harwan terra-cotta tiles point to a high

[1]A remarkable set of 24 large *Qalam* paintings on cotton—produced in Kashmir in mid-16th century A.D.—is extant in the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Several rare pieces are preserved in the Srinagar Museum.

[2] H. Goetz in *Kashmir;* Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, fortnightly—July 16, 1951 issue.

degree of sophistication in the plastic art. Figure sculpture during the rule of the Karkota dynasty was affected by artistic influences from Central Asia and from Mathura. Sculptural art reached its zenith under the Utpala dynasty, thereafter suffering a decline.

The medieval artist of Kashmir, restricted in the fields of wall paintings or murals, expressed himself in calligraphy, which came to be ranked higher than painting, sculpture and even architecture. Muhammad Hassan of Kashmir became a court calligrapher of Emperor Akbar and was honoured with the title of *Zarin Qalam* (wielder of the golden pen). Shah Jahan patronised a number of Kashmiri calligraphists. Using a reed pen with the precision of a medallist, the calligraphist of Kashmir, innately imbued with a sense of the beautıful, excelled at his art. Since he used an indigenously-made indelible ink, his works survive to this day.

CHAPTER XI

PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE 'NEW KASHMIR', which the people of Kashmir had adopted as their programme as early as 1944, envisaging a socialistic order in which social, economic and political justice would inform all institutions of the State, has been the target of the economic development of the State ever since 1947. There has been all-round consolidation and planned progress in various spheres of development as the result of the cumulative advantages flowing from the State's accession to India. The guidelines of the plans for development of the State were well defined by the Governor, Shri L.K. Jha, addressing the Joint Session of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislature on March 6, 1975:

> "The objectives will be to secure the most prudent and beneficial utilisation of the natural resources and skills peculiar to this State; to achieve the maximum possible rate of economic growth, consistently with the need to secure a degree of balanced regional development as well as balance between the rural areas and the urban; to maximise the State and *per capita* incomes; and to generate the maximum employment potential ..."

The State Government has consistently adopted a pragmatic approach to the problems of development in different regions. Planning at district and lower levels has been integrated with the programme of the region and the State as a whole, and steps taken to remove regional imbalances wherever they have existed. Hence there has been a progressive increase in the provision of the Plan funds (Central and State Sector) under the Five Year Plans, as can be seen from the following table of

Plan Provision and Expenditure (rupees in lakhs) of the Central and State Sector:

		Plan Provision	*Actual Expenditure*
First Five Year Plan	1951-56	1,274.15	1,151.71
Second Five Year Plan	1956-61	3,392.07	2,594.75
Third Five Year Plan	1961-66	7,514.44	6,185.09
Annual Plan ...	1966-67	1,966.01	1,690.24
Annual Plan ...	1967-68	2,025.00	2,043.63
Annual Plan ...	1968-69	2,170.00	2,216.84
Fourth Five Year Plan	1969-74	15,840.00	16,156.53

The total outlay for the Fifth Plan is expected to be of the order of Rs. 33632.16 lakhs, i.e., more than double the size of the State's Fourth Plan. During the first year of the Fifth Plan (1974-75), the outlay to the extent of Rs 48.00 crores has been almost fully utilized. The progressive increase in the overall budget allocations is also clear from the fact that the size of the annual plan for the year 1975-76 has been approved by the Government of India and the Planning Commission at Rs 54.50 crores. (An outlay of Rs. 90.00 crores has been approved by the Planning Commission for the Annual Plan of the State for 1977-78).

Emphasis in the implementation of the plans has been consistently laid on development of agriculture, industries and power over the years besides provision of social amenities and construction works, which establish the infrastructure of growth. The allocations for the 1975-76 Annual Plan bespeak the State's preoccupation with development programmes: Power sector, 35.4 per cent; agriculture and allied programmes, including irrigation, 21.3 per cent; social services, including education and medical services, 18.4 per cent; and, roads and Communications, 12.2 per cent. The allocation for the Industries sector has been raised from Rs 2.95 crores in 1974-75 to Rs. 3.51 crores in 1975-76—in tune with the newly-emerging sector of medium and large-scale industries. It was in this con-

text that the Chief Minister of the State, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, while addressing a meeting of the leading industrialists of Bombay on December 22, 1975, emphasised that the State's economic development was "a matter of larger national importance". He called for "constructive participation of the private sector in accelerating the economic development of the State." He observed that "the border state occupies a position of importance in India's development as it symbolises the very ideals that we are seeking to build in India". Consequently, fruitful discussions were held, under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister, in 1976-77, with well-known industrialists in the country.

A break-up of facts and figures given in the following pages under various subject-heads is intended to bring out vividly the pace of development registered in various spheres of socio-economic planned endeavour over the years.

Land Reforms

Among the states of the Indian Union, the Jammu and Kashmir State has had the unique distinction of having introduced land reforms of considerable magnitude. Feudal institutions such as *Jagirs*, *Muafis* and *Mukkararies*—rentfree lands—were liquidated summarily as long ago as 1948. The salutary feature of the reforms introduced as a result of the enforcement of the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act 1950 was that as many as 9,000 and odd landowners were expropriated from 4.5 lakh acres of land and out of this 2.31 lakh acres of land were transferred in ownership rights to cultivating peasants free of any encumbrances. By far the most important step that has been taken towards the implementation of this Programme has been the enactment of Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act 1976. The Act fixed the ceiling on land holding at 12½ standard acres, with an increase varying from 10 per cent to 20 per cent, for various categories of land under orchards, subject to the condition that in no such case shall the ceiling area exceed 25 acres. Another ameliorative measure, J. & K.

Debtors' Relief Act, 1976, provided further relief from indebtedness to the weaker sections, who had already benefited from the Debtors' Relief Act, 1950.

Land revenue up to nine rupees on small holdings was remitted during the year 1967-68, with a view to relieving the small agriculturist of the burden of land revenue. The feudal institutions of *Zaildars* and headmen in the villages, so far hereditary, were thrown open to election—a throwback to the ancient *Panchayat* system. Likewise abolished was the Mujawaza system, under which foodgrains were compulsorily obtained from the cultivators.

Consolidation of agricultural holdings has been going on, at the rate of 22,000 acres per year. This measure helps the farmers to realise more benefits from various developmental schemes and adopt intensive agricultural schemes. Just as the radical land reform freed the peasant from the age-old shackles of the feudal order, these measures reorienting the land tenure system have created a climate for better agriculture.

AGRICULTURE

Since the economy of the State is broadly agrarian in character, it is a welcome feature that a major breakthrough has been witnessed in food production. As a result of adoption of high-yielding variety seeds, the production of foodgrains was doubled during the period between the mid-50's and early 70's. During the same period, there was an increase in the area under different major crops as well as the yield per hectare. To increase their farm yield, the cultivators have been making good use of chemical fertilisers.

Under the Intensive Agriculture Programme, a number of high-yielding varieties of seeds have been tried and introduced to boost up agricultural production. This process was easier as land productivity in the State is higher in comparison with many areas elsewhere in the country. The State's agricultural experimentation has borne fruit—two high-yielding varieties of rice, K-78 and K-84, suitable for high regions, have been

evolved. Paddy has been cultivated in higher reaches of the Valley which experience early snowfall.

Increasing agricultural production through extension of irrigation is part of the basic agricultural strategy. By the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan, as many as 83.64 thousand hectares of land—70.83 thousand in the Kashmir region and 12.81 thousand hectares in the Jammu region—were irrigated in the Minor Irrigation Sector. By 1974-75 (i.e., the first year of the Fifth Plan), these figures had risen to 89.70 thousand hectares—74.48 thousand hectares in Kashmir and 15.31 thousand in Jammu. Then there are major irrigation schemes like the Tawi Lift Irrigation Scheme in the Jammu region, which when fully commissioned, is expected to create an additional irrigation potential of about 12,600 hectares.

A research centre has been established at Samba, in the Jammu region, to devise suitable programmes for improving dry cultivation practices. A provision of Rs. 87 lakhs has been made in the 1975-76 budget under the scheme to counter drought in drought-prone areas like Doda and Udhampur districts of Jammu. Special projects like multiple-cropping schemes have caught on. While in the Kashmir region wheat, oilseeds and fodder cultivation is being introduced as a second crop, in Jammu, farmers are raising paddy as an additional crop. Still another innovation was the introduction of mushrooms—European, Japanese and other strains—in 1971-72, when the production was 20,000 kg; it went up to 44,000 kg by 1974-75, and is expected to reach about 70,000 kg by 1975-76. Of the produce, 90 per cent is canned and exported from the State, under the guidance and supervision of the Agriculture Department.

HORTICULTURE

Celebrated for its rich and luscious fruits since ancient days, the fruit industry has been a source of income to the State exchequer. In recent years, as a result of the allround economic and technological advancement of the State, the fruit

industry has received a great fillip, leading to greater production and export of the produce.

The State Government has taken a number of measures to enlarge the area under orchards so as to increase fruit production. During 1967-68, the State Horticulture Department, in collaboration with the Agricultural Refinance Corporation of India, started the Area Development Programme. Under this programme, the Corporation bears 75 per cent of the total share of the loan advanced and the balance of 25 per cent is provided by the State Government, the loan advanced through the Land Development banks in the State. Thus, yearly, 5,000 to 6000 acres have been brought under cultivation since. In the result, the area under orchards increased to 1.37 lakh acres by the year 1974-75, from 31,000 acres in 1947-48. In order to meet the demand of the orchardists for plant material, several fruit nurseries have been set up and their number has increased from 17 in the pre-Plan period to about 80 recently.

The export of fruit from the State has been registering a steady increase. From 16,000 tonnes in 1947-48 and 23,064 tonnes in 1960-61, the figure rose to 1.60 lakh tonnes in 1974-75, the momentum being well maintained. With the proposed setting up of a cold storage plant in Delhi, the export figures will increase, eliminating the wastage that would otherwise occur towards the end of autumn and in winter. Already, there are plans that fruit—the quiet goodwill messenger of the State—will play an increasingly important part in earning petrodollars for the country.

Co-operative Movement

The co-operative movement has been gaining steady momentum during the last twenty-five years. With a view to building-up a self-sustaining economy, the movement has been popularised in far-off corners of the State. Co-operatives with a multipurpose role have entered the various sectors of the State's economy.

As many as 1702 co-operative societies are functioning with

a membership of 3,72,000, the working capital exceeding Rs 2445.67 lakhs. These societies cover about 50 per cent of the State's agricultural population. In the past, the co-operative movement in the State had confined itself mostly to the provision of rural credit. The scope of the movement has since been enlarged and there are not only multi-purpose co-operative societies but also co-operative unions of farmers, labourers, fishermen, milkmen, transporters, etc. A new experiment of credit-cum-marketing co-operatives has been made in areas, where agriculture is not the mainstay of the people, particularly in Udhampur, Doda and Poonch districts; the unions provide the needed consumer articles to the people and market their produce.

Ever since 1955, the co-operatives have been distributing fertilizers of different varieties to farmers, thus boosting food production. The co-operative societies also provide raw material for the manufacture of cottage industry articles and arrange sales of the produce at competitive prices, in the open market, and to the All-India Handloom Board, the All-India Handi-craft Corporation and the State Government emporia in and outside the State. About 200 industrial societies, financed by the Khadi and Village Industries Board, further the same objectives amongst their membership of over 3,000. The co-operative movement has made good progress in the State, and constant attempts are made to streamline its organisation.

Power Development

Realising that power is the most essential input for the overall development of the State, the governments of the State as well as at the Centre have taken a number of concerted measures to develop the power potential. On the eve of Independence, the total generating capacity was about 4 mWs, rising to 36.52 mWs by the end of the Second Five Year Plan. The present installed capacity of the State has risen to 93.6 mWs, and is likely to be of the order of 103.62 mWs by the end of the 1975-76 financial year. Altogether, the power position in

the State may be regarded to be substantially better than in many other parts of India.

In order to increase the existing power supply and to provide electricity to regions where hydel or thermal projects could not be put up, a number of diesel generating sets were installed. With the recent intensification of the rural electrification programme, more than 1194 villages had been provided with electricity by 1974-75. The Rural Electrification Corporation of India approved (in December 1975) the scheme to electrify 88 villages in the State at an estimated cost of Rs 86.41 lakhs. The remote region of Ladakh also entered the era of electricity, with Leh and Kargil electrified for the first time, and electricity spreading to the nearby villages.

Several major hydro-electric projects, to tap the perennial waterways, are in various stages of execution and completion : Upper Sindh, Chenani and Lower Jhelum projects. Both the units of the Upper Sindh are on stream, commissioned in 1973-74. The Chenani Project (in Jammu) stands fully commissioned. The Lower Jhelum Project is scheduled for commissioning by June 1977. In addition to these on-going projects, the Salal Project, being set up by the Central Government, is due for commissioning by March 1981. This project (also sited in the Jammu region), when completed, will not only meet the requirements of the State fully but sufficient power will also be available for neighbouring states also. The project whose capacity is estimated to rise up to 340 mWs will be the greatest landmark in the history of power development in the State.

Transport and Communications

In a landlocked state like Jammu and Kashmir, the road transport is an indispensable means of communication for the regular distribution of essential and other commodities. Hence, the Government has given the highest priority to the construction and maintenance of roads. As against 1550 km of roads in 1947-48, there were 5938 km in 1974-75.

The Government Transport Undertaking provides the people

and the tourists with a sound and efficient service, and stabilizes the fare and freight structure. In possession of a big fleet of over 1200 vehicles (as against 255 in 1947-48), the Undertaking has detailed a number of Nissan vehicles from Tangmarg to Gulmarg for the winter sports tourists. The Ministry of Railways, Government of India, is extending the railway line from Kathua to Jammu. Measures are afoot to expedite the completion of the rail-links to the State.

Since the State is yet to get its place on the railway map of the country, the State Government has accorded top priority to the completion of the road construction programmes. Measures are under way to open up backward and far-flung areas of the State. An inter-State road link between the State and Himachal Pradesh from Bhaderwah to Chamba is on the cards. Inside Kashmir, work is progressing on the Daksum-Smythan road-link which will ultimately connect Kishtwar with the Valley. The total estimated cost of the project is Rs. 765 lakhs. In the Jammu province, the important projects are the Kishtwar-Paddar road, the Basohli-Bani-Bhaderwah road, the Jammu-Surinsar road, and the National Highway Byepass, Jammu. Not only are new roads constructed, but the existing roads are continuously upgraded in surface and other modern specifications.

Communications facilities have considerably expanded with the opening of new telephone exchanges, extension of existing lines and the establishment of direct-dialling services between Srinagar and Jammu, Srinagar and Delhi, Jammu and Delhi, and between Srinagar, Anantnag and Baramulla. This service is being extended up to Bombay and other important towns in the country.

A new radio transmitter of much greater power has been installed in Jammu, and the Srinagar Station has been further strengthened. Work has since been taken in hand for setting up a radio station in Leh. The TV station in Srinagar, catering to a population of 12 lakhs, has become very popular. Many of its special programmes, reflecting cultural activities of the

State, are telecast from other TV stations in India.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Though the State is comparatively backward in the industrial sector, the scope for large and heavy units being limited because of topographical and other factors, there has been steady progress in the development of the small-scale sector, for which there is a tremendous scope. In order to promote the investment climate and develop the small-scale sector, a number of incentives are being offered to prospective entrepreneurs; during 1976-77, Rs. 33.50 lakhs were offered to enable small-scale industrial units overcome their teething problems.

A series of consultations with the big industrialists were held at Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, during 1976, with a view to attract them to invest capital in the State, and take advantage of the various incentive offered by the Government. According to Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, the Industries Minister of the State (26-1-1977), "investigators all over the country are evincing keen interest, and a number of large-scale units based on forest products, chemicals, minerals, fruits and wool are at different stages of implementation. The detergent plant of Hindustan Levers will start production from next month. The Indian Telephone Industries and Hindustan Machine Tools are engaged in diversifying and expanding their units. The Joinery Mill at Bari Brahmma has gone into production and the Wool Combing Project is in an advanced stage of construction. The Cement Project is also fast coming up at Khrew in Kashmir."

An amount of Rs. 63 lakhs has been provided during the year 1977-78 for acquisition of 180 acres of land to establish industrial estates at different places. The existing industrial estate at Zainakote, near Srinagar has been expanded by another 50 acres. One hundred acres have been likewise added to the industrial estate at Bari Brahmma, in the Jammu region. Though catering to medium and large-scale industries, these estates fulfil the needs of the small-scale industries also.

Backward and hilly areas are receiving special attention in

regard to the development of handloom weaving, leather tanning and other local crafts. Trainees from these areas are receiving loans of Rs. 2,000 each for installations of looms. Their marketing problems are taken care of by the J & K Small Scale Industries Development Corporation, which has set up a target of training 10,000 carpet weavers in five years, that is, from 1977. The production of carpets, for which the international demand is on the increase, will be extended substantially by these and allied measures. As for the handloom sector, the Corporation arranges raw material for looms at differential interest rates. It is also marketing fifty per cent of the product bulk in the first instance. The weavers are being organised for production of export oriented hand woven cloth.

Sericulture is one of the oldest industries in the State. There are two big silk factories, one in Srinagar and another in Jammu. The Srinagar factory alone manufactures about 300,000 metres of various types of silk fabrics—georgette, parachute and suiting. The Government Woollen Mills at Srinagar is another established manufacturing unit; it has 2,018 woollen and 1,576 worsted spindles.

Special attention is being paid to the promotion of export of Kashmir's world-famous handicrafted articles. Amounting to Rs. 4 crores in 1973-74, these exports went up to Rs. 11 crores in 1975-76. This constitutes 5.5% of the country's exports of handicrafts. The exports from the State are expected to touch the level of Rs. 20 to 25 crores by 1978-79.

The setting up of the Hindustan Machine Tools unit has been a pace-setter for the large-scale industrialisation of the State. Both the HMT and the Indian Telephone Industries are expanding their production at Srinagar. For instance, the target of the HMT watch factory in Srinagar is the annual production of 5 lakh watches by 1981-82. Thus, a new climate for all-round industrial development has been created in the State.

A public sector unit, the State Industrial Development Corporation, has been entrusted with the responsibility of accelerating the industrial growth in the State. Industrialisation

in all the regions is actively aided by the State Financial Corporation, the commercial banks lending a hand in the process. Consequently, new industries for the manufacture of rosin and turpentine derivatives, vanaspati, electronic goods, chemical and light engineering items, are under various phases of implementation. Thus the State—even including the erstwhile backward areas—is well poised for rapid industrial growth.

Forests

The State is rich in forests. A rich variety of spruce, such as fir, pine, hazel, wild oak, maple, beech, etc., grow in them. The graceful birch trees are found at high altitudes. The abundant forest wealth of the State is spread over 20,000 sq km. Of this the Valley and surrounding mountains and hills have 59 per cent of the forest and Jammu 15.84 per cent. Only 0.75 per cent of the vast area of Ladakh is wooded.

The abundant forest produce is classified as major produce and minor produce. Major produce includes timber, plywood and firewood; minor produce constitutes animal products, gum, resin, drugs, etc. Though there has been a steady rise in the revenues from forests in recent years, and wood-based industries are thriving, special attention is being paid to the promotion of forest research, and making up the losses on dwindling species. The Forest Department has also taken up the work of improvement of pastures and grasslands. Selected forest areas are top-dressed with fertilizers; all such conservation measures are being expanded, on a planned basis, to preserve the forest wealth of the State.

Education for All

Jammu and Kashmir is the only State in India where education is free upto the university stage. Unique features of the educational programme—since Independence—are that free education has been brought within the reach of even the poorest sections of the population and that far-flung and isolated areas

of the State are dotted with different schools and colleges. Seasonal schools have been opened for people in hilly areas and for the scheduled castes.

The *per capita* cost of education at current prices, which was as low as Rs. 0.8 during 1950-51, rose to Rs. 20.00 by 1974-75. This expenditure (annual budget, 1974-75 was of the order of Rs. 14 crores, as against Rs. 33 lakhs in 1947-48, the index of growth with base 100 for the period being 4,442) is estimated at more than the all-India figure of Rs. 18.00. The big leap forward in the educational structure is evinced from the phenomenal increase in the number of primary schools (6,042 in 1976, as against 1190 in 1948), middle schools (1450 vs. 152, same period), high and higher secondary schools (737 vs. 52), colleges (22 vs. 9) and colleges for professional education (12 vs. one), and 8 colleges for oriental education. The colleges whose enrolment figure has risen to more than 30,000 include six for women. The professional colleges and institutes include a medical college, an engineering college, an agricultural college, seven industrial training institutes, etc.

The Jammu and Kashmir University which was reorganised during 1964 into two divisions, one each for Jammu and Kashmir regions, has since been bifurcated into two separate universities to meet the increased demand for higher education. A school broadcasting system, introduced in 1969-70, covers about 200 schools in the State. Science has been made a compulsory subject from the primary level to the 10th class in the whole State. Another far-reaching measure is the school complex—10 each in Jammu and Kashmir divisions—whereby groups of schools share facilities in schools within the selected area to improve literacy and social standards. Realising the importance of imparting education through the mother tongue, the Education Department has taken steps to include the major mother tongue in the curriculum of primary schools. A beginning has been made with Kashmiri, introduced in I and II classes.

HEALTH SERVICE

In the development programmes for health, instituted since Independence, special emphasis has been laid on the eradication of various diseases like malaria, small-pox, trachoma, leprosy, tuberculosis, etc. These diseases, which used to take a heavy toll of human life, some assuming endemic form, are since more or less controlled.

The number of hospitals has recorded a big increase during the last two decades and more. As against 6 hospitals in 1950-51, there were as many as 31 modern hospitals in 1974-75, including a nursing home, sanatoria, and two Unani and Ayurvedic hospitals. There is now one hospital bed for 1,090 persons as against one for 6,712 in 1947-48, and one doctor available for a population of 4,200, compared to one for 53,700 before 1947-48. The Medical College in Srinagar produces a good number of doctors every year. A large number of doctors also become available from medical colleges in the rest of the country. The Rs. 50-crore Sher-e-Kashmir National Medical Institute coming up in a suburb of Srinagar—it will have a 600-bed hospital besides a nursing home and full facilities for research and training—will more than meet the needs of the State.

Omnibus health schemes have been launched to safeguard the health of school-going children, and to provide free medical aid to government employees and their dependants. A far-reaching plan has been formulated to set up a dispensary in each *Panchayat*, making available the services of a qualified doctor in every village, and open a primary health centre in each block, provided with a family planning centre as well as a dental surgeon. Following the recommendations of a Reorganisation Committee, the Health and Family Planning Department as well as the Medical Education Department have being reoriented to meet effectively the increasing health needs of the people.

SOCIAL WELFARE

The Social Welfare Department of the State has been concentrating on the welfare of the so-called backward classes

and other weaker sections of society. The provision of housing sites to the rural houseless, specially purviewed by. the Advisory Board formed by the Chief Minister in 1975, is being implemented at an accelerated pace. An amount of Rs. 10 crores has been earmarked for the development of backward areas for the year 1977-78.

For imparting training to the members of the scheduled castes and the so-called backward classes in weaving, leather technology, wood work, tailoring, knitting and embroidery, the Government has set up 18 technical institutes in the State; of these, seven are in the Jammu region. The Social Welfare Department is also running 66 community social welfare centres—39 in Jammu and 27 in the Kashmir region. Condensed courses in tailoring and embroidery are imparted to members of the so-called backward classes at these centres. There are two residential institutes for the blind, one each in the Jammu and Kashmir regions. Similarly, the Department runs two beggar homes, one in each region. "Markaz-i-Behbudi Khawateen" (Women's Welfare Centre) was inaugurated by the ex-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at Miskeen Bagh, Srinagar, on October 11, 1975. The Markaz (centre) was a part of the women's welfare complex gifted by the Government to the women of the State as a part of the International Women's Year celebrations.

The welfare of Government employees, particularly at the lower rungs, is particularly looked after. Another aspect of welfare is the generation of employment opportunities. Special facilities were provided to technocrats and unemployed graduates in the recent Annual Plans for setting up small-scale units. The welfare and development efforts of the State Government are being supplemented by the Central development investments to help solve the problem of the educated unemployed. Then there is a special *ad hoc* problem like the rehabilitation of 18,000 residents of the Chhamb area in the Jammu region, displaced in the 1971 conflict with Pakistan, which is proceeding smoothly under the central body, the

Chhamb Displaced Persons Rehabilitation Authority, formed in April 1974. Small-scale industrial units set up in far-flung areas under the Rural Industrial Programme have a pronouncedly welfare bias. The units include handloom weaving, oil crushing, leather tanning, shoe-making, auto-workshop, bakery, wax candle-making, etc. Altogether, an amount of Rs. 10 crores has been earmarked for the development of backward areas during the year 1977-78.

Despite more than 25 years of planning, and the fact that the whole of the State is covered under the Community Development and National Extension Service programmes, there remain pockets of extreme backwardness where existence is characterised by subsistence agriculture and primitive cattle and sheep-breeding. These pockets have been identified in the Valley and other regions. High power advisory boards were set up by Sheikh Abdullah's Government in 1975-76 to frame programmes of rapid development of such hitherto neglected areas and communities.

LADAKH—A NEW LOOK

A backward area about which it used to be said that time stood still in that Shangri-la, the region of Ladakh has happily emerged from its centuries-old inertia, with a progress chart of all-round development, for more than a decade.

A massive programme of economic reconstruction and development, started in 1964, has made available the usufruct of progress to the people of this isolated area. The opening of the Srinagar-Leh road was a landmark in so far as it threw open the remote region—one of the world's highest habitations—to the currents and cross-currents of modernity and socioeconomic change. The air service connecting Leh with Srinagar and Chandigarh has also been a marked development in speedy communication as well as in aeronautical telecommunication.

Ladakh has received special attention in the planned development schemes of the State. In the Fifth Five Year Plan of the

State, the total allocation for Ladakh is Rs. 18 crores, as against Rs. 6 crores in the Fourth Five Year Plan. During 1975-76, a provision of Rs 2.72 crores was made for the development of Ladakh on the Plan side. This was in addition to the provision of Rs. 2.06 crores made for the development of this area in the non-Plan budget. Provision of better and stable infrastructure for the development of the region, larger allocations for development of communications, power supply and irrigation facilities, are broad features of the development programme.

About 90 per cent of the population of Ladakh is dependent on land for its livelihood. The principal crops in the region are barley, gram and wheat. The total area under cultivation is about 45,000 acres, mostly artificially irrigated. The yield of wheat and barley has shown considerable increase as a result of the introduction of improved varieties of seeds. The Department of Agriculture has set up four agricultural farms, one each at Nubra, Changam, Saspool and Kargil.

Experiments in the introduction of potato cultivation have proved successful. 'Hot house, experimental farming—utilising steam from geo-thermal reserves in growing vegetables—has proved successful at Chumathang, 737 km from Leh. Both tropical and winter vegetables—including cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, chillis, etc.—unknown erstwhile in the arid region, were cultivated, after the geo-thermal reserves had been found by the Geological Survey of India. If this experimental farming catches up, Ladakh may well turn into a blooming farm, yielding vegetables in abundance. Horticultural experiments—introducing apples, apricots, grapes and pears—have also met with success; and, orchardists are provided subsidies to lay new orchards.

Canals are being laid to develop the possibilities of irrigation, which would promote the future development of forests, agriculture and animal husbandry. Various canal projects are nearing completion, among them the 49-km long canal from Upashi to Leh, which will irrigate 15,000 acres. The most ambitious of

these projects is the Rs. 14-crore Stykna hydel project on the Indus river, about 20 km from Leh, which will not only provide electricity but also increase agricultural production through irrigation of land. The electric supply at Leh and Kargil, since augmented, will receive a boost from the Stykna project, and more villages will be electrified.

The progress in the field of education is apparent from the fact that almost every village in Ladakh has a school now. Educational facilities up to the primary level are available even in remote areas. Ladakhi, the mother tongue of the region, has been introduced as an elective subject for the Matriculation examination. There are altogether 366 educational institutions catering to the needs of the people in 241 villages. All those who receive education are entitled to a stipend of Rs. 75 per month up to graduation level and Rs. 100 for higher studies. As for health service, there are two fullfledged hospitals at Leh and Kargil, besides a dozen dispensaries and an equal number of maternity and child welfare centres; a decade ago, there were only two dispensaries in the province.

To add to the existing livestock population, a number of cattle and other breeding farms have been set up at Shamspa, Nubra (for yak breeding), Mathoo (Russian Merino farm) and Kargil. The famous Ladakhi goat, that provides the *Pashmina* wool for the shawl, is being bred with the Angora goat—the cross to yield better and more *Pashmina* wool. Likewise, the Russian Merino sheep, with their high wool offtake, are being crossed with the hardier local variety. A poultry research-cum-production projeet is in progress at Khaltsi.

In his first broadcast to the people, soon after assuming office in February 1975, the Chief Minister, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah declared that he would "ensure that all the three regions not only have equal opportunities for full and speedy development, but the people in every part of the State, have a sense of full participation in the political affairs of the State." People of Ladakh were given for the first time representation

in the State Cabinet with the inclusion of Shri Sonam Narboo, a distinguished son of Ladakh, as Minister for Works, Power and Tourism. Thus, adequately represented in the Government as well as in the State Assembly, Ladakh is wearing a new look, the pace of overall development and socio-economic transformation accelerated by the Ladakhis' robust faith in a bright future.

CHAPTER XII

ARTS AND CRAFTS OF KASHMIR

KASHMIR IS known throughout the world as much for its arts and crafts as for its scenic beauty and bracing climate. These have catered to the artistic urge of the people in India and abroad. The products of unique craftsmanship, for which the unrivalled environs of the Vale set against the snow-clad mountains have provided the perennial inspiration to the craftsman, have won the appreciation of connoisseurs from far and near. The diverse articles range from woollen textiles of fleecy-soft texture and matchless excellence in weaving, hand-woven carpets of finest warp and weft, to the exquisite designs worked on papier mache, wood work, silverware, etc. The handicrafts executed in the cottages play an important part in the economy of the State. Tourists form the largest clientele of the cottage industries. Besides, the products are marketed through Government emporia set up in the State and the rest of India.

The motifs drawn by the *Naqqash* (the designer) rival the diverse natural beauty, abundant in the magnificent surroundings of the spacious valley, and are inspired by the sparkling lakes and tarns, the broad curves of the serpentine Jhelum, the variegated flora and fauna as well as the breath-taking colours of the skies at the sunrise and sunset over the azure mountains. He also draws upon the poetic fancies and religious or philosophical themes, portraying these attractively in his designs. The deft handiwork of the craftsmen with the brush, chisel and needle, complete the products which have delighted the world from time immemorial.

'SILKY WEB OF WOOL'

A unique position among Kashmir textiles is held by the

celebrated shawl. The shawl industry is as old as the hills. The Mughals reorganised the industry. Akbar and his successors wore shawls of Kashmir. After Napoleon presented a rare shawl to Empress Josephine, shawls became the craze of the day in France. A shawl is seen falling over the shoulders of the famous Mona Lisa. "This fine, silky web of wool," says Larousse, "worked with fanciful flowers, distinguished by the tints of its colours, its singular designs, those strange palms draped in shapes of great varieties, those borders formed of tortuous lines crossing each other in endless devices, all combine to inspire, at the very sight of a shawl, those who see it, with a desire to possess it." In *The Marriage Contract*, Balzac referred to "white Cashmere".

The process of shawl-making is fascinating from the start. Assiduously, women sort out the lustrous, rough substance from the smooth fleecy wool of the Kel goat, and then ply it over a *charkha* (handloom) of the indigenous type, while chanting folk-songs. This fabric, called *Pashmina*, takes two forms on the loom : the loom shawl (entirely woven on the loom) and the embroidered shawl, which is woven with an embroidered pattern. The celebrated 'ring shawl' has been given the popular name, because it can actually pass through a ring. Rare and different from the others is the Jamvar shawl. In this case, the threads of the warp and weft are dyed before weaving. The peculiar charm of this famous shawl is derived from the symphony of colour schemes depicting architectural and mythological figures interwoven with landscape designs.

Shawls and Carpets

A high-class shawl is expected to have the designs worked evenly on both sides. The price of a Pashmina shawl may range anywhere from a few hundred rupees to thousands of rupees, depending upon the craftsmanship and the time factor involved in its creation. Be it said to the credit of the shawl-makers of Kashmir that the fine shawl of Kashmir has not been successfully made elsewhere, though attempts were made

from the British days in India and in Britain itself.

The embroidery of Kashmir, called *Kasida*, is world-famous. Varied, rich in colour, elaborate in detail and exquisite in execution, the *Kasida* patterns are freely drawn by the *Naqqash* mostly from memory. The finest *Kasida* work, particularly embroidered on shawls or saris, has no 'wrong' side. The connoisseurs set great value by embroidery which displays the same fineness of work on both sides of the material.

The *Namda* felt rug made from beaten wool, which is then embroidered over, is an important branch of the *Kasida* industry of Kashmir. Its manufacture has been the proverbial boon to the poorer people of the Valley. The worker can prepare two *Namdas* a day, with the help of three persons. Fine embroidery makes the *Namda* sometimes more attractive for decorative purposes than a pile carpet.

The *Gabba*—a unique type of floor covering, prepared from old woollens in a variety of forms and designs—comes next to the *Namda* industry, and its manufacture is localised at Anantnag (Islamabad). Baramulla specialises in printed *Gabbas*. Rich blending of colours gives the old material a new appearance, and the finished product—attractive as well as cheap—is suitable for use as *divan*-spreads, bedding material and even drawing-room rugs. The *Gabba* industry—more a home industry than a cottage industry—is a valuable asset from the economic point of view, for it makes profitable use of waste materials. The chain-stitch rug, which resembles the *Gabba* carpet, is also manufactured economically, as the base is of hessian cloth and coarse wool, over which floral and other motifs are worked.

The chain-stitch is also used for the making of a large number of miscellaneous articles such as bags, screens and cushion covers. These find a ready market abroad. Embroidery on wearing apparel, whether of cotton or silk, is in constant demand, and has vast possibilities of expansion. Responding to demands, from baby clothes to dressing gowns, the embroiderer of Kashmir is highly sensitive to current demand and

keeps on producing a number of goods required for decorating a modern house like honsehold linen and upholstery articles prized by housewives.

The carpet industry, introduced into the Valley by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin is justly renowned. From the point of weaving, carpets are broadly divided into two classes, smooth-faced carpets and pile carpets. Pile carpets (*Kalins*) made in Kashmir since the Muslim rule, attained great perfection. Worked with floral and other designs, the hand-woven, pile carpet, became the national craft of Kashmir, thanks to the excellent indigenous wool, which constitutes its foundation. The carpet industry flourished under Sikh rule. During the British days, the Europeans provided further impetus to the industry, introducing Iranian motifs. As of now, the Kashmiri carpet can match the Iranian or any foreign make, and is high on the export list of Kashmir.

Kashmiri carpet craftsmen—mostly centred in Srinagar—present an interesting spectacle, when the master craftman orally directs the colour pattern and they skilfully ply coloured yarn balls. The origin of the magnificent colour schemes of Kashmiri carpets is traceable to the Elysian background of nature of the Vale. Besides, the flora and fauna of different lands—Kashmir, Central Asia and Iran—are depicted on the carpets of Kashmir in a harmony symbolic of traditional synthesis of Kashmir's diverse cults and cultures.

Silver and Copperware

Kashmir's silverware compares favourably with that turned out by the most fashionable establishments in London and Paris. Both plain and engraved work is executed to cater to the differing tastes of buyers, which include many American tourists. The range of silverware is indeed wide: silver tea-sets, flower vases, toilet sets, scent chests, ornamental picture-frames, cigarette-cases, tumblers, etc. Among the fllora and fauna, leaves of the chinar and the lotus furnish the popular patterns. Designs of the lilac, a popular flower of the Valley,

are also wrought in silver.

The Kashmiri artisan also produces excellent products of copperware consisting mostly of cooking pots and *Samovars*—tea-kettle of Russian origin—and sundry articles for the household or the mantlepiece. The copperware of Srinagar is admiringly adapted for electroplating. There is a good demand for lovely copper trays inlet into tables of carved walnut-wood, the carpenter working in cooperation with the deft coppersmith. Enamelled silver-work is also pretty. The smith of Ladakh prepares copper bowls, tea cups, jugs and trays—his exotic scenic environment impressed indelibly on his products.

Papier mache is 'mashed paper.' A craft peculiar to Kashmir, it was also introduced into the Valley by that great monarch, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, who has been aptly called the Akbar of Kashmir. Its products, beautifully painted over with ornamental patterns, comprise picture-frames, pen-cases, screens (which can vie with the Chinese counterparts), tables, tea-pots, writing sets, candle-sticks, handkerchief and tie-boxes, vases, stamp boxes and other utility goods whose need is now fairly widespread. Green fields sloping towards the snow-capped mountains, sparkling streams running over rounded rocks, Shikaras and lotuses blooming on the lakes, are the favourite papier mache patterns. The craftsmen have introduced brass or metal lining for the new style of papier mache goods which makes them more durable and useful.

Wood-carving

Walnut and Chinar wood, abundant in Kashmir, provides material for the wood-carving, which is among the best known cottage industries of Kashmir. The Kashmiri carver, second to none in the world in his skill as a designer, uses walnut wood—which is durable and has a rich natural-veined surface—to make excellent furniture and toilet articles such as chairs, cabinets, writing or dining-tables, jewellery boxes and ornamental caskets, which are greatly appreciated. Some of the walnut-wood products—cigar boxes, and trays, table-tops,

handkerchief and collar boxes—are delicately carved. Floral designs of almost every conceivable variety are made with great accuracy of detail in chased or raised work. Even without its colouring, it is easy to identify a flower. Some connoisseurs, appreciative of the dexterity of Kashmiri wood carvers, have commissioned them to make furniture of Victorian and other period styles. Some of the highly coloured and polished wooden articles look like lacquerwork.

KHATAM-BAND

Khatam-band is a speciality in Kashmir woodwork and comprises ceilings of rooms, made from thin panels of pine wood, cut into geometrical designs. Builders of house-boats have kept this old craft alive. In New Delhi, a representative specimen can be seen at the Santoor restaurant (the only restaurant in India specialising in Kashmiri cuisine, called *Wazwan*) of Ranjit Hotel, where the house-boat decor of the place—creation of architect Shiban Ganju—is complete with *Khatam-band* ceiling, interspersed by willow-work designs and the walls panelled with walnut wood covered with papier mache, *Gabba* and Kashmiri jewellery ornamentation. In Kashmir itself, the shrine of Khwaja Naqshband, near the Jami Masjid of Srinagar, presents the best example of this craft, which is also found in Samarqand, Iran, Istanbul, Algiers and Morocco.

The Kashmiri is an intelligent and clever carpenter. The boats (flat-bottomed mostly) that he makes are of many sizes, and include the famous house-boats, the favourite residence of summer visitors. The wicker-work industry is also notable. Lunch and flower baskets, chairs and tables and various other articles of common use are turned out in elegant designs. *Kangri*, the Kashmiri chafing vessel, its earthen bowl encased in wicker-work, is also made as an artefact—ornamented with wicker rings and coloured mica—for the mantlepiece.

JAMMU, LADAKH

There are other artistic industries too. The tanners of the

State, whether living in Srinagar or Jammu, can turn out excellent leather. Leather saddles of Srinagar, *chappals* and sandals of Jammu, both worked over with artistic designs, are made to please and to last. Kishtwar specialises in blankets, Poonch in spoons and forks made from unseasoned wood. Cotton printing has been a speciality of Samba, in the Jammu Province.

The Ladakhi smith prepares copper bowls, tea-cups, jugs and trays, embellishing these with coloured semi-precious stones, his scenic environment impressed indelibly on the products. He also produces copper cooking-pots and tea-kettles. The Ladakhis have recently started working semi-precious stones and artificially produced pearls into jewellery pieces. Their knitted products, though roughly executed, are cosy to wear in the bitter cold of the long winter and are in great demand in the State.

The arts and crafts of Kashmir are distinguished by time-old attachment to traditional techniques and methods. Though he caters to jet-age tourists and increasing export demand, the craftsmen of Kashmir has not been adversely affected by the ultra-modern trends. Whatever he makes with his hands bears lasting testimony to his infinite patience, coupled with the inspiration he derives from the panorama of nature of the 'Eden of the East'.

CHAPTER XIII

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS OF KASHMIR

"ANCIENT INDIA has nothing more worthy of its early civilization than the grand remains of Kashmir...which though inferior to Palmyra or Perspolis in stateliness, are in beauty of position so immensely superior to either," wrote Dr. E.F. Neve, many years ago. Besides impressive archaeological monuments like the ones at Mortand, Avantipur, Srinagar, etc., in Kashmir, and at Babor and Billavar in Jammu, the Valley contains unique remains of the full-fledged neolithic culture. About 15 km east of Srinagar, Burzahom, the well-known menhir site, has yielded remains of a neolithic life which vie with the rare finds in Pakistan at Mohenjodaro and Taxila. Traces of neolithic life have also been observed in the Valley from Anantnag to Pampur at Olchibag, Pampur, Panzgam, Begargund, etc.

NEOLITHIC REMAINS

The neolithic people in the First Period of Burzahom, whose date has been tentatively fixed at 3000 B.C., were some sort of pit-dwellers. The pits, dug into *karewas*—lacustrine deposits comprising two groups, lower and upper—were plastered with mud, some provided with carved niches. Charcoal, ash and pottery were noticed in the interior of the pits. Tools of stone, such as polished hand-axes and harvestors, constituted the implements of the people. The Second Period of Burzahom reveals dwellings made of mud or mud-bricks. The art of pottery reveals a more refined form. This period, unlike the previous one, evinces traces of disposal of the dead, in the form of burials. Both primary and secondary burials were in vogue. Large menhirs were erected in Period III. Remnants of this

period show wheel-turned pottery, over and above the hand-made articles. The neolithic phase of Burzahom has been placed between 2300 and 1500 B.C. The Third Period continued up to 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. The ground and polished stone axes found at Burzahom have not been matched anywhere in north India or in the Deccan so far. But these implements, found in abudance in the south of the Krishna, Amaravati and South Arcot districts, may establish more relationship between this culture in the north (at Burzahom) and in the south of India.

The historical monuments belong to a later period, 3rd to 6th centuries A.D. at Harwan, and at Ushkur, 2nd to 5th centuries A.D. The importance of the Buddhist *stupas* and *chaityas*, whose foundations have been excavated at Harwan and Ushkur, lies in indicating the beginnings of architectural trends in Kashmir, though there appear solitary specimens of Buddhist settlements. The village of Harwan (ancient Sadarhadvana)—better known by the reservoir, nestling among wooded hills, a few km from the famous Shalimar (Mughal) garden—has yielded archaeological remains, the only ones of its kind in India. These consist of an aspidal temple with a courtyard surrounded by a wall, a building complex including a *stupa* and a *chaitya* (temple) and other enclosures, constructed in pebble walls in mud-plaster, as pebbles were in plentiful supply in this hilly terrain. To reinforce the pebble construction, untrimmed blocks of stone were put in at places. The aspidal temple was constructed in this—what is called—diaper-pebble masonry.

The *stupa* and a set of nearby rooms—corresponding in every detail to the *stupa* courts at Gandhara—were built in the later 'diaper-rubble' style, in which walls were made of irregular stones with intervening spaces filled with smaller stones. The upper part of the *stupa* has disappeared. What remains of it in an open quadrangle is square in plan, with a three-tiered base. Almost in ruins, the temple at Harwan is a large aspidal structure, square in front and round at the back. There is a spacious

antechamber with a circular sanctum behind. The plan of the temple shows association with a Buddhist cult, which is underlined by the *stupa* in its vicinity, though of a later period.

The epoch-making excavations at Harwan also yielded a large number of moulded brick-tiles, of various patterns and shapes, testifying to a unique form of art, unrelated to any known art school. Unlike in other parts of India, where the sculptors portrayed gods and goddesses or the Buddha, here they depict the men and manners of the time and the habitat, particularly the flora and fauna. The motifs taking their inspiration from the sylvan surroundings are : lotus and other flowers in full bloom, geese flying in formation, cocks and rams in aggressive postures, archers shooting arrows at deer, a lady holding a flower-vase, another playing on a drum, naked beggars, etc., all depicted picturesquely. The patrons of the sculptured tiles seem to have been upper-class gentry who hunted deer with bow and arrow, lazed in the company of dancers and girls, chatting with them in balconies.

It is not possible to place the enigmatic people represented in these unusual tiles, though their rather heavy features reveal some resemblance with the people of the nearby regions of Yarkand and Kashgar. They certainly do not look like Kashmiris or any Indian race. With their striking cheek bones, small eyes, foreheads sloping back, they may have been un-Indianised Kushans or people hailing from some other similar tribe.

Brahmi characters on tablets have been discovered at Harwan near the *stupa*. Votive tablets with a legend in the Brahmi script of the 4th century A.D., which may be contemporary with the *stupa*, add interest to the finds. It is important that not only are the historic excavations preserved but extensive surface excavations carried out to unearth more treasures of the past that could lead to firm conclusions about the chronology and significance of these neolithic and chalcolithic peoples.

VARIOUS INFLUENCES

The archaeological finds of Ushkur—situated one km from Baramulla—are of a later date, the early medieval. It was a flourishing town in medieval times, owing to its position on the main trade route between Kashmir and north-western India. A ruined *stupa* and terracotta sculptures found here have been credited to the post-Kushan period. The *stupa* appears to have been built over an old structure, which might have belonged to the Kushan period. The heads of the Buddha and Bodhisattva, which predominate among the sculptures, are striking for the range of facial expressions, a trait that is common with the terra-cotta figures found at Akhnoor, near Jammu. Some of the Akhnoor finds are specimens of Harappan pottery, which set a new locale for the Ṣind Valley civilization. Akhnor, Harwan and Ushkur sculptors—counted among the most sensitive that India has produced—drew much of their inspiration from Buddhist Gandhara art. The experiments in sculpture were considerably influenced by examples in the rest of India, astir with creative activity under the great Guptas, whose sway and influence extended from Mathura to Sarnath. The importance of Harwan and Ushkur, however, lies in revealing the various influences that affected the architectural developments in Kashmir, particularly Greek, Roman and Byzantine.

The "Paradise of the Indies", that Kashmir has been called, is of great interest to archaeologists—and even lay tourists—for the impressive remains of its stone architecture, which dot the Valley. The characteristic features of the architecture of Kashmir are: lofty pyramidal roofs—safeguard against snow and rains—trefoiled doorways, covered by pyramidal pediments and great width of individual columns in colonnades of imposing dimensions. That Buddhist Gandhara art influenced the early architecture of Kashmir has already been mentioned. More lasting was the later influence of Roman and Greek styles—particularly the latter—which is manifested in the close resemblance between the Kashmiri colonnade and the classical

peristyle of Greece. The strong Greek influence, discernible not only in colonnades but in porches and pediments, persisted for centuries, even after the medieval period, and to this extent, Kashmir architecture is distinct from the Hindu architecture of the rest of India. No wonder then that one of the names for the people of Kashmir in ancient India was *Sastra-Silpina*, or 'architects', in commendation of their acknowledged skill in building arts. Hence, Sir Arthur Cunningham,[1] who first explored the archaeological remains of the Valley, characterised the Kashmir style of architecture as 'Aryan Order', to distinguish it among the more celebrated forms.

Early Temple Architecture

The best specimens of early temple architecture are to be found at the temples at Shankaracharya, Ludov, Pravaresa and Narasthan. Perched atop the 304-metre Takht-i-Sulaiman hill, commanding a marvellous view of the Dal Lake and other environs of Srinagar, the Sankaracharya temple rests on a solid rock and consists of an octagonal basement of 13 layers of stone 6 metres high. The general shape of the temple is that of a cone and the whole of the structure is of stone, no cement having been used.

The date of the Shankaracharya temple has been a subject of controversy among archaeologists. Kalhana mentions a king named Gopaditya who built a shrine of Jyesthesvara on the Gopadri hill—the name of the hill in Hindu times. An authority, contemporary to Aurangzeb, ascribes the temple to Solomon, the cue taken from the Muslim name of the hill, *Takht-i-Sulaiman* (throne of Solomon). Abul Fazl[2] called it *Koh-i-Sulaiman* (mountain of Solomon). Sultan Sikandar did not raze this temple to the ground—as he demolished Martand and other edifices—because he thought (erroneously) that Mahmud Ghazni might have offered prayers inside it. In any

[1]Cunningham, Sir A.: *An Essay on the Asian Order of Architecture as Exhibited in the Temples of Kashmir.*

[2]*Ain-i-Akbari*, Tr. Jarret, Vol. II, p. 355,

case, by Mughal times the temple had already assumed the character of a legend, which would cancel Fergusson's view that the temple was built in the time of Jahangir. Fergusson was probably influenced by the two Persian inscriptions on a column of the inner sanctum, one of which belongs to 1644 A.D., in Shah Jahan's region. That these inscriptions are later interpolations is clear from Bernier's description of the temple (he accompanied Aurangzeb to Kashmir in 1665 A.D.) as "an extremely ancient building". It is probable that the temple is a century or so older than Martand, the grandest specimen of Kashmir's early architecture, which the Shankaracharya temple shows in a still simple and experimental stage. Here is also found the early specimen of the horse-shoe arch, which attained the perfect trefoiled shape at Martand.

About three km from Pampur lies the temple of Rudresa at Ludov. In plan and other details, it is modelled on Gandhara structures and bears a close resemblance to the *Vihara* at Guniyar in Swat Valley. A simple cornice consists of three courses of projected filleted blocks, superstructured by the earliest form of a dome. The simplicity of the construction and lack of decorative details, like the Shankaracharya temple, indicate an early date. Hence, it has been placed between the Guniyar (5th century) and the Martand (8th century).

The temple of Pravaresa has been identified with the enclosure of the cemetery of Baha-ud-Din, and placed in the 6th century A.D. by Kalhana. In the same category are the ruins of the Ranaswamin temple which is now the Ziarat (mausoleum) of Pir Haji Muhammad in Srinagar. These typify the medieval Kashmir temple with its vast court, surrounded by an enclosure of chapels, though still in a nascent form. The origins of the corner chapels of the front facade of Martand and Avantipura can be found in these structures.

These architectural concepts were further elaborated at the temple at Narasthan, 16 km north-east of Avantipura. Stylistically, it belongs to a later date than the Shankaracharya temple and earlier than Martand, for its pediment and arch-

motif are more developed than the former. In general appearance similar to the temple at Ludov, the Narasthan temple is more imposing in its elaborate details. Nestling in the foothills of the Brariangan range, the temple commands a fine view of a narrow valley, which feature also anticipates the incomparable view of the Martand temple.

MARTAND: "ARCHITECTURAL LION..."

The advent of the Karkotas provided a great and lasting impulse to art and architecture, reaching its zenith in the rule of Lalitaditya Muktapida (724-761 A.D.). Regarded as practically the founder of the 'Aryan Style' of Kashmir architecture, Lalitaditya is remembered as not only the builder of the world-famous Martand temple and the temples of Wangat, but the city of Parihaspura, where he raised imposing temples and Chaityas. In most of these structures, Lalitaditya Muktapida evinced his catholic taste in borrowing ideas fully from the more developed techniques in India and countries to the north and west, particularly Greece, synthesising them into a vigorous architecture, bearing the impress of the personality of a conqueror-builder who was at the same time a lover of the arts and letters. Unfortunately, Parihaspura, the capital city that Lalitaditya built, is now a 'city of stones', in popular parlance. Nevertheless, the ruins of the two great temples of Parihasakesava and Muktakesava show vast enclosed courts, surrounded by chapels bigger than the ones at Narasthan, that being the plan on which the Martand temple was built. (Martand is the name of the Sun-god, worshipped by the Hindus.)

Situated at a distance of 8 km from Anantnag, Martand, the grandest of all ancient temples of Kashmir, has been styled as "the architectural lion of Kashmir". The incomparable scenario of the temple is best put in the words of General Cunningham, who did a good deal of pioneering work in the study of Kashmir architecture: "It overlooks the finest view in Kashmir, and perhaps in the known world. Beneath it ties the 'Paradise of the Indies', with its sacred streams and glens, its

orchards and green fields, surrounded on all sides by vast snowy mountains whose lofty peaks seem to smile upon the beautiful valley below. The vast extent of the scene makes it sublime, for this magnificent view of Kashmir is no pretty peer in the half-mile glen, but the full display of a valley 30 miles in breadth and 84 miles in length, the whole of which lies beneath the ken of the wonderful Martand."

The most striking in size and position among the archaeological remains of Kashmir, the Martand temple is not more than 12 metres high but its solid masonry, with its elegant trefoiled arches and fine arcades symmetrically raised on a majestic plinth—offset by an imposing gateway which is of the same width as the temple itself—lends it a unique grandeur. The temple itself is 18 metres long and 11 metres wide; its height, when complete in the pyramidal form, may have been about 23 metres. The courtyard that surrounds the temple is as elegant as the temple itself, measuring 66 by 42 metres. The central edifice stands in a large quadrangle, surrounded by a colonnade of fluted pillars, whose Grecian aspect is remarkable. There are 84 columns, an appropriate number in a temple of the sun, representing the product of the number of days in the week and the number of the signs in the Zodiac. The peristyle is the largest example of its kind in Kashmir.

The temple proper has three distinct chambers. The first, the outer chamber, is highly decorated. The middle chamber is also ornate, but the inner chamber is plain and is closed on three sides. The walls of the middle chamber are filled with single figures in relief, two of Surya (sun-god) and two of Lakshmi (goddess of wealth), one on each panel. There is also a well executed image of Ganga (the sacred river-goddess), standing upon a crocodile. The walls of the gateway are profusely decorated internally and externally. Most of the pedimented niches—the trefoiled arches being a characteristic feature of the Kashmir style, Indo-Hellenic or Gandhara in origin—contained single standing figures of gods. These are but the remnants of this structure, which must have been really grand



Plate [illegible]. The stoneware of Kashmir compares favourably with any turned out by sophisticated establishments elsewhere.

Plate [illegible] the ruins of the temples built by Avantivarman, at Avantipur 29 km from Srinagar off the national Jammu Srinagar highway.



in the 11th century A.D. The main temple is of "great solidity and considerable beauty, the chief features being a hall whose roof was held up by eight columns supporting beams of stone ten feet in length." Carved ornamentation was a special feature of the stone edifice—characteristic again, of the Kashmir temple architecture. The Indo-Aryan style of these ruins is corroborated by Kalhana who referred to political, economic and cultural intercourse between the Kashmir Valley and these areas.

About 104 km from Jammu, Billavar has a fine medieval temple, known as Billavakesvara. The temple dates back to the 11th century. According to Frederick Drew[1], "the temple spire is profusely ornamented externally, the ornament consisting mainly of floral scrolls, flower and vase decoration and niches with stepped pedimental roofs filled with decorative lozenges and figures of gods." The temple contains a number of images including those of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva (five-headed) as well as Ganesha and Bhairava.

Islamic Architecture

Even before the advent of Muslim rule, the art of stone architecture in Kashmir had been already forgotten for a long time, in extended periods of political instability verging on chaos. Muslims introduced wooden architecture in Kashmir, though it had a vogue from ancient times, as isclear from the allusions in the *Rajatarangini* to Hindu and Buddhist structures of which there is no trace, owing to the impermanence of the material used. Though adopting the architectural style of their predecessors, the Muslim genius expressed itself in decorative motifs and the Arab concept of spaciousness, intimately associated with Muslim architecture.

The wooden architecture of Kashmir was patronised by the enlightened monarch, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70 A.D.). His court historian, Srivara, who wrote the later *Rajatarangini*,

[1]Drew: *The Jammu and Kashmir Territories*.

mentions a long list of buildings that he constructed in "brick and wood". One of the oldest Muslim structures in Kashmir is the tomb that Zain-ul-Abidin built for his mother at Srinagar, near Zaina Kadal—the bridge that he had constructed and was named after him. Built in the typical Saracenic style, though the brick masonry shows Persian influence, the tomb—raised on the plinth of a demolished temple—is remarkable for the glazed tiles and moulded bricks of the dome and the cupolas. The mosque of Mian Sahib at Zadibal in Srinagar—also built by the same Sultan—stands out for its beautiful tile decoration. Sir John Nicholls[1] has characterised this tile work among the "most valuable antiquities which Kashmir possesses", adding that this was one among the three monuments in India where such tiles could be found.

In Kashmir Islamic architecture, the tombs and mosques are mostly square structures. The walls are made of brick and mortar, sometimes of logs laid across each other. Timbers of the roof or ceiling are supported with deodar columns, usually ornamented. With eaves projecting, the roof is held on a series of brackets and decked with carved bell-shaped tassels at the four ends. Window openings and balustrades are elaborately carved. The focal apex is the tall, graceful steeple rising above the structure, though the older buildings have lost their steeples and finials. Turf laid in birch bark covers the roofs, which retain waterproof properties and are overgrown with flowers and plants, in summer and autumn.

The medieval wooden style of Kashmir Muslim architecture is best typified in the Khanqah mosque of Shah Hamadan in Srinagar, between the third and fourth bridges, on the right bank of the Jhelum. Sultan Sikandar built the mosque in 1395 A.D. to commemorate the visit of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, popularly known as Shah Hamadan. Twice destroyed by fire, the structure as it stands now—with cloisters added later—was rebuilt by Abul Barkat Khan in 1732 A.D. For the most part

[1]Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report. 1906-7, p. 161.

built of wooden balks, the intervening spaces were filled by very small and carefully dressed bricks. Some of the doors and windows are exquisite specimens of the Kashmir wood-carver's art at its best. The pyramidal roof culminates in a graceful steeple, rising 38 metres from the ground.

The most "architectural" structure in the wooden style of Kashmir is the Jama Masjid of Srinagar. Built by Sultan Sikandar in 1398 A.D., and enlarged by his son, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, it was rebuilt (after fires) and repaired by several kings including Jahangir and Aurangzeb. The mosque—a huge structure containing all the essential components of the Kashmir type of wooden building—is a quadrangle, roughly square in shape, its northern and southern sides measuring 107 metres. Four minars, one in the middle of each side, are covered by a series of pyramidal roofs. The compound is divided by two broad paths, planned after the pattern of a formal Mughal garden.

The Mughal emperors, great lovers of the Valley and their governors, gave a fillip to the art of stone building in Kashmir, introducing the style then in vogue in Agra, Delhi and Lahore. Since Kashmir's own stone building art was practically dead, Akbar had to import Indian master-builders to construct the wall round the Hari Parbat fort to enclose his newly founded city, Nagar-Nagar. The fort is a commonplace structure but the two imposing gates of the wall, Kathi Darwaza and Sangin Darwaza, are of architectural interest, the latter more ornate of the two.

The Pathar Masjid (stone mosque), opposite the Shah Hamadan mosque across the Jhelum, in Srinagar, is the largest surviving Mughal structure in Kashmir. Built in local grey limestone, the facade consists of nine arches, remarkable for their horizontal construction. This was the continuation of the true arch which revolutionised the architecture of Kashmir. Built in 1623 A.D., by Nur Jahan, the Pathar Masjid was, however, never used for prayers. Questioned about the cost of its construction, the Empress is said to have remarked super-

ciliously: "As much as this"—pointing to her jewelled slippers. When the high-priests heard this, they boycotted the mosque as a desecrated building. The construction was supervised by the well-known Mughal historian-architect of Kashmir, Malik Haider Chaudhura.

Beautifully situated on the western bank of the Dal Lake, 8 km from Srinagar, is the Hazratbal mosque, which was built in the reign of Shah Jahan. An interesting blend of Kashmir and Mughal architecture, the mosque acquired sanctity when it became the repository of the Prophet's hair brought from Medina by Sayyid Abdullah in 1699 A.D.—hence the name, *Hazrat-bal*, *Hazrat* (Prophet) and *bal* (Kashmiri for a bank or landing place). The brick masonry of the wall and portico—resting on a plinth of dressed stones—is remarkable.

Mughal Gardens

Early Hindus and Buddhists specialised in landscape gardening and monks from Kashmir carried the tradition of gardening as far as China and Japan. It was left to the cosmopolitan Mughals to re-introduce the old Indian art, as it were, from their northern homeland to Kashmir, whose running brooks, green alluvial hill slopes and salubrious climate presented the ideal locale for laying out gardens that became world-famous for their natural charm and unrivalled beauty of environment. Akbar, finding Kashmir resembling his original home in Turkistan, set about laying a garden at Nagin Bagh, which is in ruins now.

Jahangir and his art-loving consort, Nur Jahan, laid out the world-famous gardens at Nishat, Shalimar, Achabal and Verinag. Shah Jahan improved them, adding to Shalimar the last and best terrace, and making a small pleasure-garden around a spring at Chashma Shahi (royal spring), which Aldous Huxley described as "architecturally the most charming of the gardens near Srinagar".

Shalimar, the site of a villa called Mar-Shala (or the 'Hall of Love') in the time of Pravarsena II, the founder of Srinagar,

not only testifies to the existence of a garden tradition in ancient Kashmir, but became a splendid venue for a pleasure garden—the veritable Versailles of the Mughal emperors. Arranged in four terraces of nearly equal dimensions, the Shalimar is 530 meters long and 180 meters broad. The magnificent black stone pavilion—"a romance in stone"—in the fourth terrace, used as a banqueting hall in the palmy days of the Mughals, is surrounded by the beautiful reservoir, 46 metres square. The Shalimar is connected with the Dal Lake by an artificial canal.

Commanding a magnificent view of the Dal Lake, the Nishat Bagh ('Garden of Bliss')—the most favoured resort of tourists—has the same length as the Shalimar but is much wider, and had 12 terraces, one for each sign of the zodiac; now there are 10 terraces. As in the Shalimar, the beauty of flower-beds is enhanced by the fountain jets, fed by limpid waters cascading down the terraces. The tanks and the canal are lined with polished stone. There are two pavilions, one at the lower and the other at the upper end of the garden. Giant chinars (plane trees), bordered by lines of cypresses, shade the walks, which are beautified by green turf, studded with flower-beds.

Chashma Shahi, favourite with visitors for the famous spring of pure and cold water, is situated high up in a hollow of the Zebwan hill and commands a lovely view of the lotus stretches on the Dal Lake and Hari Parbat fort in the background. Comparatively a small garden, it has three terraces and the central aqueduct, tanks, waterfalls and fountains are fed by the sparkling water gushing out of the spring, from a lotus basin, with the same unfailing abundance as it must have, in the great Mughal's days.

It is said that there were as many as 700 Mughal gardens round the Dal Lake which are extinct. Across the Dal Lake lies the Nasim Bagh (the 'Garden of Breezes'), deriving its name from magnificent chinar trees. Its walls, canals and fountains have disappeared. Facing the garden on the lake lies the Char Chinar island, named after the four chinars planted there by

the Mughal prince, Murad, in 1641 A.D., when he was governor of Kashmir.

Situated 64 km to the south of Srinagar, the spring of Achabal (old Hindu name, 'Akshvala', from king Aksha), was selected by Jahan Ara, the daughter of Shah Jahan, to lay a garden in 1620 A.D., 140 metres long and 135 metres broad. The waters of the spring, issuing from fissures, flow through the garden, traversed by three aqueducts, lined with stone and abounding in fishes. Similarly, Jahangir trained the waters of the Verinag spring[1] (source of the river Jhelum) into an octagonal tank of sculptured stones. His son, Shah Jahan, constructed cascades and aqueducts in straight lines through a fine garden.

In conclusion, it may be observed that the architecture of Kashmir broadly effected the same synthesis of different trends and influences as has been a salutary feature in the spheres of religion, philosophy and literature. Kashmir architecture, wrote Sir John Marshal,[2] "exhibits ... a fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideals...happy blend of elegance and strength", and is an "eloquent testimony to the enduring vitality of Hindu art under an alien rule and to the wonderful capacity of the Muslim for absorbing that art into his own and endowing it with a new and greater spirit".

[1]Jahangir loved this place so much that when he died on his way back from Kashmir, he expressed the desire that he should be buried at Verinag. Apprehending that mountain passes might get blocked, Nur Jahan and the courtiers decided otherwise, thus leaving Jahangir's last desire unfulfilled.

[2]*The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 641.

CHAPTER XIV

TOURISM

THE NATURAL beauty of the Vale of Kashmir has deservedly won high praise and even extravagant encomiums from travellers, since time immemorial. Hieun Tsiang, the well-known Chinese pilgrim, who travelled through India and Central Asia for 16 years in the 7th century A.D., was captivated by the lovely Vale to spend two years there. Ou-Kong was the next Chinese traveller of note to visit the Valley (759 A.D.) and to stay four years. "Kailasa is the best place in the three worlds; the Himalayas are the best part of Kailasa; and Kashmir the best part in the Himalayas," wrote Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini*. In *Travels of Marco Polo* (Yule), there is a reference to Kashmir: "The men are brown and lean, but the women, taking them as brunettes, are very beautiful. The clime is finely tempered, but neither very hot nor very cold."

DOWN THE AGES

The sparkling streams, the happy murmuring of myriad brooks, the limpidity of its sheety lakes and the sublime beauty of the mountain tarns, the splendour of snow-covered sunny flower-laden uplands and meadows—these and the variegated beauties of the flora and fauna were variously described by the travellers and others, whose accounts of the manifold charms of the Vale make fascinating reading.

To start with, let us recall an episode of love-at-first-sight from the hoary past—around 300 B.C. Chandragupta Maurya let 30,000 Greek soldiers and 20,000 mercenaries under Antiochos, the son of Seleukos Nikater—a stratagem of war, to compel the Greeks into submission later, after sealing the exit passes from Kashmir—slip into the Kashmir Valley.

Diophantes, the sister of Antiochos, fell in love with the Valley, when she had the first view, shouting with joy: "This is a veritable paradise, and these lakes, oh ravishingly beautifull" Later, when she got to know from her brother that the passes were closed, and they could not leave Kashmir, she said, "Let us go on camping here. This land is more beautiful than any other I know." She was given away by Seleukos in marriage to Chandragupta Maurya, to cement the treaty of peace with the Mauryan conqueror; she was renamed Devabrantha. A latter-day footnote to this historic episode is a tongue-in-the cheek observation by James Milne:[1] "Alexander the Great passed here, leaving behind enough Greek soldiers to assure Kashmiri women of lovely profiles and often white skins."

The Mughal scholar, Alberuni, who flourished at the court of Mahmud Ghazni (996-1031 A.D.), wrote an account of Kashmir which is fuller than those he wrote about other parts of India. An Iranian poet, Toghra, of Ispahan, delineated Kashmir:

> Tell me what land can boast such treasures?
> Is aught so fair, is aught so sweet?
> Hail, Paradise of endless pleasure!
> Hail! Beautiful and beloved Kashmere!

'A Garden of Eternal Spring'

A lover of nature *par excellence*, Jahangir made a number of sojourns to Kashmir—to fly "from power and pomp and the trophies of war", as the Irish poet Thomas Moore put it in *Lalla Rookh*. Jahangir admittedly loved Kashmir more than any other province of the Mughal Empire. In the Valley's loved haunts, many of which he and his beautiful consort, Nur Jahan, beautified with Mughal gardens and other constructions, the royal lovers found abundant opportunities to indulge their passion for nature and to feast their eyes and ears on the

[1]Milne, James: *The Road to Kashmir*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1929.

incomparable sights and sounds that this terrestrial paradise alone could vouchsafe them. Some of the most florid passages in Jahangir's memories, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*[1] record the beauties of the Valley, like this one:

> As I had repeatedly heard praise of the *Ilaq* of Kurimarg (Gurais Valley), I felt much disposed to visit it at this time, and on Tuesday, the 7th Amurdad (July) rode in that direction. How shall I write its praise? As far as the eye could reach, flowers of various hues were blooming, and in the midst of the flowers and verdure beautiful streams of water were flowing; one might say that it was a page that the painter of destiny had drawn with the pencil of creation. The buds of hearts break into flowers from beholding it. Undoubtedly, there is no comparison between this and other *Ilaqs*, and it may be said to be the place most worth seeing in Kashmir.

Jahangir's principal pastime was observation and collection of flora and fauna, for which the side-valleys and upland meadows provided him ample scope. He recorded his impressions:

> If one were to take to praise Kashmir, whole books will have to be written...Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring...a delightful flower-bed, and a heart-expanding experience for *dervishes*. Its pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond all description. There are running streams and fountains beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches, there are verdure and running water. The red rose, the violet and the narcissus grow of themselves; in the fields, there are all kinds of flowers and all sorts of sweet-scented herbs, more than can be calculated. In the soul-enchanting spring, the hills and plains are filled with blossoms...The finest inflorescence is that of the almond and the peach...

[1]From the standard literal translation by Rogers and Beveridge.

'TURKEY OF THE INDIES'

In *Travels of Sebastian Manrique* (1629-1643), the author describes "a sumptuous Royal Palace" on "a famous lake six leagues round" (the Wular Lake), and adds: "Large numbers of geese and ducks frequent these aquatic meadows."

Other 17th-century travellers described the capital city and its lake and other environs, like Pelsaert (1626) and De Late (1631), the latter admiring the island palace in the midst of the Dal Lake. Thevenot (1684) says: "Cashmir...was called Turchina, that is to say, the India of the Turks, or the Turkey of the Indies." Giving the location of "the Town of Cashmir, which bears the name of the Province, and which some call Syrenaquer", Thevenot observed:

> This little kingdom is very populous...It is full of lonely Plains, which are here and there intercepted by pleasant little Hills, and delightful Waters; Fruits it hath in abundance, with lovely Verdures. The Mountains, which are all inhabited on the sides, afford so lovely a prospect by the great variety of Trees, amongst which stand Mosques, Palaces, and other Structures, that it is impossible perspective can furnish a more lovely Landskip...

De Late's use of proper names is exotic: "Cassimere, Chismeer or Quexmir. The capital of the province is called Sirankar..."

'PARADISE OF THE INDIES'

The most notable European to trek over the Banihal range from the hot plains and to leave a graphic record was Francois Bernier, a French physician attached to the Mughal court at Delhi in the 17th century A.D. He described "the modes of travelling adopted by the king, the princesses and rest of the Harem" as well as the magnificence and pomp of that vast army which wound its irksome and perilous way across the parched plains to the hills. Conferring on Kashmir the title "Paradise of the Indies", Bernier wrote lyrically:

The numberless streams which issue from the mountains maintain the Valley and the hillocks in the most delightful verdure. The whole Kingdom wears the appearance of a fertile and highly cultivated garden. Villages and hamlets are frequently seen through the luxuriant foliage. Meadows and vineyards, fields of rice, wheat, hemp, saffron and many sorts of vegetables among which are intermingled trenches filled with water, rivulets, canals and several small lakes, vary the enchanting scene. The whole ground is enamelled with our European flowers and plants, and covered with our apple, pear, plum, apricot and walnut trees, all bearing fruit in great abundance.

Bernier gave a plus mark to Kashmiris: "The Kachemirys are celebrated for wit and considered much more intelligent than the Indians . . . The women especially are very handsome . . ."

In Moll's *India* (1744), we find the observation which reads like an unsolicited tourist ad. of those days: "This province is encompassed on every side with mountains, but is itself a fine fertile plain, through which innumerable little rivers descend from the hills, which, together with the northerly situation renders it mighty agreeable to the sun-burnt inhabitants of the southern provinces. The complexion of the natives is not inferior to that of the Europeans, and the country is said to produce most of the fruits of Europe."

'A Province of Fairyland . . .'

The Valley, ringed by the snows of the Himalayan range, a jewel of the rim of Central Asia, attracted the pens of many travellers since Bernier. Some, like Forster—an officer of the Bengal army, who passed through Kashmir in 1783 A.D., when Kashmir had fallen under the harsh rule of the Afghans, after the downfall of the Mughals—did not sound so sanguine, but the Vale was still a "paradise" to the eye of the beholder. "Endeavouring to describe the natural beauties of a valley,

which, perhaps, stands unparalleled for its air, soil and a picturesque variety of landscape," Forster's first impression of "luxuriant imagery" of the Vale at Veere Nag (Verinag) was: "No extraordinary warmth of imagination was required to fancy that I stood, at least, on a province of Fairyland". He depicted the Shalimar which showed the "magnificence and taste" of "Jehang Gheer" and the "enchanting Noor Mahal" and praised "the rose of Kashmir, which, for its brilliancy and delicate odour, has long been proverbial in the east; and its essential oil or attar is held in universal estimation." The Kashmiris "may be termed a fair people, and their women in southern France or Spain would be called Brunettes."

The first European to visit Ladakh was the Jesuit father, Hyppolyte Desidori (1715 A.D.), who left a detailed account of the places visited. The flora and fauna of Ladakh as well as its rigours of climate were described by two Englishmen, William Mooreroft (1822 A.D.) and James Gilbern Gerard (1829), both belonging to the profession of medicine and in the employment of the East India Company.

Nearly a century and a half ago, a distinguished botanist, Victor Jacquement, was deputed by the French authorities as a travelling naturalist to India and the East. He visited Chinese Tartary, Ladakh and the Kashmir Valley in 1830-31 A.D. His monumental collection of data published after his death in six quarto volumes added considerably to the stock of knowledge of flora and fauna. Letters which Jacquement wrote to his relations and friends from Kashmir, record in everyday language much of what he had noticed and experienced. In one letter, he wrote that his "health had quite recovered by the healthy climate" and "in a month's time I shall be eating cherries from my garden, next apricots, then peaches and almonds, then pears and apples and last of all grapes . . ." In another epistle, he listed an inventory of artifacts he would bring from Kashmir, concluding with this encomium for the shawl: "I should like to encase you, my dear, in a beautiful and immense morning gown of Cashmere shawl, well wadded,

and I am persuaded that you would find the luxury very great of indulging in such a garment."

'FOCUS OF ASIAN CIVILIZATION'

A lawyer-writer, G.T. Vigne, hailing from England, chose a life of travels and explorations and visited different parts of Kashmir including Skardu, Ladakh and Srinagar, leaving picturesque accounts. Few travellers have described better the curves of the broad-bosomed Jhelum:

> The line of beauty was never more faithfully depicted than by the course of the broad and beautiful Jhelum; the "fabulous Hydaspes" of the Augustan age. So regular, without being too much so, are its windings as it approaches the city from the southward; so just are the length and curvature of its sweeps, and so well-proportioned are its width, and the space it occupies to the extent of the rich Savannah through which it flows; so tranquil and lake-like is the surface of the water, that at first sight, we cannot divest ourselves of the idea that nature has called the assistance of art, and has ornamented the scenery beneath us with reference to the most approved principles of landscape gardening.

C. R. Tollemache thus versified the beauties of the stately Jhelum:

> A hundred miles of snow-clad mountain peak
> On either side uprear their heads to heaven,
> And, flecked with light and shade and yellow foam,
> Broad-bosomed Jhelum wends his stately way.

If Egypt has thriven on the bounties of the Nile, it is truer to affirm that Kashmir is the gift of the Jhelum. There is no other instance of a high-altitude valley of the dimensions of Kashmir intersected by a broad river for over 80 km.

Characterising the Pir Panjal range as "a fitting boundary

for the noblest valley in the world", Vigne concluded (1842) with a veritable prophecy, over a century and a quarter ago, that Kashmir would become a cynosure for sportsmen and other tourists of the world:

> Kashmir will become the focus of Asian civilization; a miniature England in the heart of Asia. The climate will permit the introduction of the sports and games of England; and presenting so many attractions, it will become the *sine qua non* of the oriental traveller, whether he be disposed to consider it as the *Ultima Thule* of his voyage, or a resting place whence he may start again for still more distant regions.

'Truly Grand and Beautiful'

A German baron, Charles Hugel, met Vigne and other European travellers in Srinagar in the winter of 1835 A.D. In his extensive travels, "the most wonderful objects in the world" which Hugel noticed were the Taj Mahal and Kashmir. After recording his impressions of the Mughal attractions in and around the Dal Lake, Hugel penned a memorable picture of the incomparable view that one can have from the top of the Shankaracharya Temple in Srinagar:

> The massive construction and peculiar form of this edifice render it well worthy of a visit. The mountain . . . is 1200 feet high; the view from it, over the whole Valley of Kashmir is indeed most truly grand and beautiful. Motionless as a mirror, the lake lies outstretched below, reflecting the vast chain of the hills, while the extensive city is seen spreading along its shores; and the Jhelum winds slowly like a serpent through the green valleys, and to complete the scene, the lofty Pir Panjal, with its countless peaks of snow, forms on one side a majestic boundary.

'Lalla Rookh'

It is interesting that Thomas Moore whose celebrated "Lalla

Rookh" sang the beauties of "the Vale of Cashmere" in undying verse never visited Kashmir. He drew upon the travel accounts of Bernier and Forster and the memoirs of Jahangir. The immense popularity of "Lalla Rookh" in the middle of the 19th century provoked the curiosity of many travellers about Kashmir. An oft-quoted quatrain is:

> Who has not heard of the Vale of Cashmere,
> With its roses the brightest the earth ever gave,
> Its temples and grottos, and fountains, as clear
> As the love-lighted eyes that hang over their wave?

The most superb view of the Valley, to be had from the top of the Shankaracharya Hill at Srinagar, was depicted in these words by Tom Moore:

> Day, with his banner of radiance unfurled
> Shines through the mountainous portal that opens,
> Sublime, from the valley of bliss to the world.

'Last Look at her Mirror . . .'

An army officer, Thomas E. Gordon, who was a member of the mission sent by the Government of India in 1873 to Yarkand, passed through the Karakorams, and described in the course of his book *The Roof of the World* (1876) the Remu glacier:

> With an even surface, wonderfully sea-like . . . this great Remu glacier stands unrivalled in its grandeur of extent and close resemblance to a frozen sea.

Recording the chronicle of a drive through the waterways of Srinagar Lt.-Col. Torrens, who came to the Valley with a party of six Englishmen in 1861, followed the fashion of the day by first quoting the famous line with which "Lalla Rookh" began:

"Who has not heard of the Vale of Cashmere?"

While graphically describing the Dal Lake and the boatmen, Torrens again quoted from Tom Moore:

"... The Takht-i-Soliman ... rises from a green bed of gardens and orchards, and may be said, poetically speaking, to 'form one side of a grand portal to the lake' ... The broad expanse of the Lake opens out in front of us; and then its surface is so thickly covered with broad leaves and rosy surface of the lotus, and the tangled green of the *sinhara*, or water-chestnut—its sides so concealed by floating gardens—that it is difficult to form any idea of its size. The first glimpse is, however, enough to convince you of its beauty...

"The day is now drawing to a close and we see the lake at its best—

'At sunset when warm o'er the lake,
Its splendour at parting summer eve throws,
Like a bride full of blushes, when lingering to take,
A last look at her mirror at night when she goes.'

"The boatmen are quite alive to the beauty of the scene—though so common a one to them—for they love and are proud of their far-famed lake; gathering lotus flowers as they paddle homewards, they ... sing long ballads in praise of the loveliness of their valley ... beating time to their voices with the pleasant splash of the paddle."

'Supremely Beautiful ...'

In the present century many writers—too numerous to be quoted here—wrote about the charms of the "valley of happiness", as the old poets extolled Kashmir. The renowned historian, Mount Stuart Elphinstone, Sir Walter Lawrence, Dr. E.F. Neve and so many other westerners, graphically described the land. How the "loveliness of the land" can enthral and "cast an enchantment" is best described in the lyrical, poetic prose of Jawaharlal Nehru:

Like some supremely beautiful woman, whose beauty is almost impersonal and above human desire, such was Kashmir in all its feminine beauty of river and lake and graceful tree. And then another aspect of this magic beauty would come to view, a masculine one, of hard mountains and precipices, and snow-capped peaks and glaciers, and cruel and fierce torrents rushing down to the valleys below. It had a hundred faces and innumerable aspects, ever-changing, sometimes smiling, sometimes sad and full of sorrows. The mist would creep up from the Dal Lake and, like a transparent veil, give glimpses of what was behind. The clouds would throw out their arms to embrace a mountain-top, or creep down stealthily like children at play. I watched this ever-changing spectacle and sometimes the sheer loveliness of it was overpowering and I felt almost faint. As I gazed at it, it seemed to me dream-like and unreal, like the hopes and desires that fill us and so seldom find fulfilment. It was like the face of the beloved that one sees in a dream and that fades away on awakening.[1]

Important Industry

In a kind of historical spectrum, we have quoted enough in substance from accounts of travellers to the bewitching Valley, to show how the lovers of natural beauty, down the ages, not only adored the bounties that Nature lavished on Kashmir but found these a fruitful theme of literature. One more quote from a 'Kashmirphile', who knew the Valley intimately, would not fill the cup of these deserved eulogies to the brim. "Who that has heard of it has not pined to go there?" wrote Sir Francis Younghusband,[2] adding lyrically, "Who that has gone there

[1]Based on Pandit Nehru's 12-day visit to the Valley in 1937, the article appeared in *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, in 1940. With Panditji's permission, the present writer prefixed it as the Introductory Essay to his first book on Kashmir, entitled *Kashmir: Eden of the East*, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1945.

[2]Younghusband: *Kashmir*.

again, has not wished to remain there for ever?"

After the Banihal Cart Road—a veritable feat of engineering—was opened in 1918 A.D., and the first motor vehicles entered the Valley, gradually displacing the *tongas* and *ekkas* (horse-carts) that had been plying on the Jhelum Valley Road (opened in 1882 A.D.), few people could have imagined that Kashmir would one day become a popular tourist resort, not only for Indians but for holiday-makers from distant lands. In the modern sense, Kashmir tourism began after World War I and has never looked back. Some stray figures of tourist arrivals speak for themselves: 1946: 27,158; 1954: 39,654; 1962: 93,000; 1966: 1,19,275; 1967: 1,46,081; 1973: 1,95,846, and 1976 (3,93,000—including 37000 foreigners—the total being double the number of 1975).

No wonder then that tourism has become an important industry, vital for the economy of the State. From the latest computations, it is envisaged that by 1975-76, the earnings from the industry are expected to be of the order of Rs 15.33 crores, of which the foreign exchange element would be Rs 2.17 crores—it was Rs 1.32 crores in 1970. The financial impact of Vaishno Devi pilgrimage in the Jammu province (five lakhs in 1976) is not counted in this projection.

The peculiar attraction of the mountain-girt valley for the tourists is that it caters to every taste. It is at its best the year round, depending on the predilection and preference of the visitor. The Valley, surcharged with an atmosphere of calm tranquility, provides a fertile field for study to geologists, botanists and archaeologists. The angler finds plenty of scope for his rod. The sportsman finds ample game in the forests and along the verdant mountain-sides. Those interested in water sports and bathing enjoy themselves at the Dal, Nagin and other lakes. There, for all and sundry, are the mountain-resorts at various altitudes—the upland meadows called *margs*, sloping towards the magnificent snow-capped Pir Panjal range on the west and towards the greater Himalayas on the east, perched at heights ranging between 2000 metres and 4000

metres, above sea-level. Along with mountaineering, trekking can be indulged in—with camping out—at favourite resorts, old and new.

The Valley, practically one large health resort, is enchanting all the year round. The colourful, flower season starts from the middle of March and April; May and June find fruit trees laden with many-hued carpets of flowers decking the meadows and hill slopes. June and July offer swimming, sun-bathing, surf-riding and trekking. August and September are good for fishing trout and mahseer in ice-cold mountain streams. Big and small game are to be found aplenty in September and October; this is autumn, the fruit season, which finds the Valley ablaze in red and russet. It is also a good time for trekking. December to February is the season for winter sports in Gulmarg.

Surrounded by an amphitheatre of mountains and flanked by hills, lakes and the meandering Jhelum, Srinagar, the summer capital of the State and the first destination of tourists, wears a delicate look because of its chinars, poplars and willows. Well equipped to meet the tourist traffic at any time of the year, it has a magnificent tourist centre as well as an exclusive five-star hotel, overlooking the Dal Lake, that was once a palace. Tourist reception centres, catering to all types of tourists, are also located at Jammu, Kokarnag and Pahalgam.

The house-boats on the Dal and Nagin lakes offering all modern amenities—and water sports—in the midst of the most beautiful scenery in the world have become world-famous. Few people know that it was a far-seeing Englishman, M. T. Kennard, who first conceived—and executed in 1883 A. D.—the idea of a 'floating house'. Kashmiris used to call house-boats the "the boat of Kennath Sahib" for quite some time until the English word caught on. Gifted with an innate sense of beauty and design, the Kashmiri has since specialised in decorating the interior of the house-boat most artistically and making it most comfortable. Resembling Venetian gondolas, though larger in size, the house-boats can be punted and

The almost unlimited potential of Kashmir in the field of domestic tourism is being well exploited. The ambitious target, to have half a million tourists—foreign and domestic—by the end of the Fifth Plan may well materialise.

JAMMU PROVINCE

Jammu, the winter capital of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, is the gateway to the Kashmir Valley. Jammu province may not be rich like the Valley with the bounties of Nature but it offers, nevertheless, resorts of scenic beauty, hill treks, picnic spots, lakes and places of pilgrimage. Visitors flock to Jammu not only because it is the gateway to Kashmir but as a tourism destination in its own right. The shrines of the province—especially Vaishno Devi—attract increasing numbers of pilgrims from all over India, and even from abroad.

Jammu city itself (300 metres above sea level) is beautifully situated between the Outer Hills bounding the Valley of Kashmir and the plains of the Punjab. The city has long been a centre of Indian pilgrimage and culture, renowned especially for the Pahari school of miniature painting which developed in this region. The towering citadels and spires of this unique "city of temples", perched on a ridge, can be viewed from afar. Raghunath Mandir (Raghunath, i.e., Sri Rama, and Mandir means temple) is one of the biggest temple complexes of northern India. Though 125 years old, the complex is remarkable for sacred sculptures as well as one of the richest collections of ancient texts and manuscripts in its library. The main temple contains the image of Raghunath; other temples are devoted to gods of the Hindu pantheon, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, etc. The hub of Jammu's social and cultural activities, Raghunath Mandir, becomes crowded during the period of the pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi (63 km north of the city). There are many Raghunath temples in Jammu province as well as at Kishtwar and Ramban.

Worship of Shakti—a variant of the Mother Goddess, an

embodiment, in the Hindu idiom, of the all-pervading power of the Omnipotent Lord—is prevalent in all parts of Jammu province, Shakti shrines dotting the rugged landscape. The best known of the Shakti shrines is the one called Vaishno Devi, which has the same place in Jammu as the Amarnath Cave has in Kashmir. The rush of visitors is great during the autumn, when the pilgrimage takes place. The State Government has taken a number of measures to meet the phenomenal increase in the number of pilgrims.

Jammu is the railhead for Srinagar and is also connected by air, and road (584 km) to Delhi and to Srinagar (289 km). The India Tourism Development Corporation has a 50-room hotel, on top of a hill, overlooking the town and the Tawi valley, which caters to the growing number of tourists who visit the town or make it the base for treks or pilgrimages.

Flanked by the Tawi river flowing at its feet, Jammu is bounded towards the north by an amphitheatre of hills culminating in the three conical peaks of the sacred Trikuti hill, harbouring the Vaishno Devi Cave shrine. Just across the Tawi river, the hillock facing Jammu is crowned with the historic Bahu fort. Jammu, apart from these physical attractions, is the base for many trips and treks to *margs* and resorts. Situated on the river Chenab, gushing down the hills, is Akhnoor, a picnic spot, 32 km from Jammu; the nearby heart-shaped Surinsar lake reflecting hillocks in its crystal blue water also attracts tourists. Rajouri (160 km from Jammu) is a summer resort.

There are a number of beautiful hill resorts situated on the winding, mountainous Jammu-Srinagar national highway, which are popular with domestic and foreign tourists: Kud (105.6 km), Patni Top (112 km), Batote (124.8 km) and Banihal (187 km). All these resorts have dak bungalows and other accommodation for tourists; Patni Top has a youth hostel. About 20 km from Patni Top, accessible via a motorable road, is the lovely meadow of Sanasar, where the water of the tarn in the midst of the greenery of the vast pastures presents an enchanting vista. The

spring water of Sanasar is sweet and digestive. Batote has the potential of becoming a popular summer resort, apart from being the central place for treks in Bhaderwah and Kishtwar.

Situated in the mountain ranges are Bhaderwah and Kishtwar, rather remote summer resorts, situated 208.4 km and 240 km, respectively, from Jammu, on the Batote-Bhaderwah road. This is the Upper Chenab region of the province, the valley known as Chhota Kashmir (Little Kashmir) and often compared with the highlands of Switzerland and the Black Forests of Germany. Dotted with heavily-forested game preserves, the Kishtwar region affords excellent opportunities for big and small game shooting.

In the west of Jammu province lies the attractive area of Poonch. Spots like Swarankot, Behran Gala, the Noori-Chhamb waterfall and Loran are well-known attractions for tourists. (Noori-Chhamb was the favourite halting station of the Mughal Emperor, Jahangir, and his queen, Nur Jahan, great lovers of Kashmir, on their way to the Valley.)

LADAKH PROVINCE

One of the most elevated regions of the world, whose forbidding terrain is arid beyond relief, Ladakh—which used to be called "Western Tibet" or "Little Tibet"—has a peculiar fascination for western tourists, who have started coming to this lofty land ever since it was reopened to traffic in 1974.[1] Described as the 'roof of the world' Ladakh, where people live at heights ranging from 2500 to 4500 metres above sea level, is no destination for people with weak hearts. Burning heat by day is succeeded by piercing cold by night. The pink granite of the sheer mountains, many of them snow-capped, contrasting with

[1]As against 600 foreign tourists, in 1974, 2000 of them had already visited Ladakh by September 1975. Several American tour operators scheduled itineraries of Kashmir in 1976 which include special tours to Ladakh, providing the ultimate in Himalayan experience to the hardy tourist as a contrast to the comparatively staid Delhi-Agra-Jaipur circuit.

the deep blue sky, holds an exotic charm for the tourist, who can rough it, missing the comforts of luxurious hotels while trekking in this 'high desert country'.

Brisk sunshine and keen air and green river valleys, dotting the vast black mountainscape like oases in a desert, greet the tourist. A visit to this Shangri-la is definitely an unforgettable experience of a lifetime. Ladakh is connected with Kashmir by a black-topped road, which traverses mountains and passes, and is open from May to November. Leh, the capital of Ladakh, is reached in two days by bus from Srinagar via the Srinagar-Leh road. The curving mountains road passes through Sonamarg, the Zojila Pass (3,413 metres) and the Drass Valley (the coldest inhabited region in the world, after Siberia), culminating in a night's halt at Kargil. Leh (434 km from Srinagar) is reached on the second day. Indian Airlines proposes to connect Srinagar with Leh in the summer of 1978, opening Ladakh to air tourism.

Some of the oldest monasteries are to be found near the road. One of the main attractions of Leh is the monasteries. The biggest monastery in Ladakh is situated at Hemis, 40 km from Leh, along a road crossing the Indus. Among the innumerable *Tankhas* (paintings on cloth), there is one supposed to be the biggest of its kind in existence. The exposition of this *Tankha* takes place once in 11 years. Every year, in June, a fair ('*Mela* of Hemis Gumpa') takes place at Hemis which is a colourful occasion for the mask dances. Other *Gumpas* (monasteries) are at Tiksey, Sunker, Spitak, Fiang Alchi etc. The Lama Yaru monastery is situated at a high altitude immediately after crossing the highest point of the Srinagar-Leh motor road. In the vicinity are interesting cave-dwellings carved out in the mountainside.

The zealous mountaineer, eager to explore this Shangri-la of the east, can hire tents, camp gear, kitchen accessories, as well as bearers and guides, at Srinagar. Accommodation and facilities at Leh, Kargil and other places, so far limited, are being expanded. The tourists are taking it easy, and most of

all, the Ladakhis are a source of delight to them. As a European tourist puts it, Ladakh is "one of the few wonderful spots where the people leave you alone and that in itself makes a holiday worthwhile". One Californian tourist who was taken up with the Ladakhis dancing in the streets remarked that in Ladakh "one steps into the middle ages and therein lies its charm".

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